



THE PSALMS

CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED.

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THE PSALMS

CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED

*AN AMENDED VERSION
WITH HISTORICAL INTRODUCTIONS
AND EXPLANATORY NOTES*

BY

FOUR FRIENDS

“It shall greatly helpe ye to understonde Scripture, yf thou marke not onely what is spoken or wrytten, but of whom, unto whom, with what wordes, at what tyme, where, to what intent, with what circumstance, consyderynge what goeth before and what followeth after.”

*Prologue of MILES COVERDALE, sometime Bishop of Exeter,
Translator with TYNDAL of the Psalms in the Great Bible.*

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PREFACE.

THE Editors believe that the moral and religious lessons of the Psalter will gain greatly in force from a consideration of the time and circumstances of the several Psalms, that much light may be gained by an endeavour to grasp the point of view of the writers, and that each Psalm so looked at will in most cases tell its own tale. If this historical treatment seem for a moment to impair the fulness of the spiritual meaning, they believe that in the end this meaning will only come out more fully.

For the common arrangement of the Psalms into five books and for the order of these books no principle has been discovered, which commands anything like general assent; none, which even claims to throw any light upon the meaning of the Psalms; neither does the difficulty of rearranging them with reference to their several times and occasions appear insurmountable. If, with the utmost care bestowed upon the language of the Psalms and the history of the times to which they may apply, it is impossible to discover the exact time and occasion of every Psalm, yet there are few of which we cannot ascertain to what group

and to what period they belong, while to many the exact time and occasion may with reasonable certainty be assigned.

In many cases the meaning, and in most cases the force and beauty of the Psalms have been brought out by the introduction of the larger and smaller divisions—the strophes and the lines—in the arrangement here adopted. The eye is everywhere the minister of the mind; it is so in a more than usual degree in the poems of a language, which deals so largely as the Hebrew in curious parallelisms and nicely wrought balance of structure.

Many errors have crept into the Version of the Prayer-Book of the Church of England,—chiefly owing to the influence of Jerome's Latin Translation,—which leave the verses in which they occur unintelligible.

To restore the Psalter as far as possible to the order in which the Psalms were written,—to give the division of each Psalm into strophes, of each strophe into the lines which composed it,—to amend the errors of translation, is the object of the present Edition.

No single person seemed better qualified to afford the necessary guidance in this work, as well by his consummate ability and erudition as an Oriental scholar as by his wonderful insight into Jewish history and by the devotion of a long and laborious life to these and kindred subjects, than Professor Henry Ewald. In the first of the three points mentioned above, his chronological disposition has been accepted, not with any wish to press its several conclusions but in the belief that generally true it is always suggestive; in the second, his arrangement has been implicitly followed; but in the third, no amendments have been admitted without a careful examination of the principal commentators. The Editors, in concluding a work in which they have drawn largely from the rich mine of his writings on the 'Poets' and

‘Prophets of the Old Testament’ and ‘The History of the People of Israel,’ wish to express their profound sense of his immense services in the cause of biblical research. Personally they wish also to express their gratitude for his kindness in allowing them to make whatever use of his labours seemed most likely to serve for edification to English readers, in sending them the sheets of his 3rd edition of ‘the Psalms’ while passing through the press, and in answering with unvarying patience and courtesy any questions which they had to ask in the course of the work.

The Version of the Psalms followed in this volume is that of the great Bible of 1540, adopted in the Book of Common Prayer for the Church of England in 1548, and retained there when the new and more accurate translation of the Psalms from the Hebrew was substituted for it in the present authorised Version of James I.; but though in many passages less accurate, this version has an intrinsic beauty and force and so surpassing an excellence, that it has insensibly become the expression of the religious feeling of the nation. Dr Nicholls¹ has well expressed the feeling of all who have studied the Prayer-Book and the Bible Versions, when he says, “the translation in the Prayer-Book is very plain and easy and fitter for devotion than any one extant, by reason that the Hebraisms are not so much retained as in the others, and notwithstanding some persons’ objections, it is nigher the original than those who have not examined it may imagine.” In numberless instances a careful consideration of the two Versions has led the Editors to feel that ‘the greater divergence is the higher unity.’ No amendment therefore has been introduced unless to remove obscurity or actual error, and great care has been taken to introduce no diction discordant with

¹ On the Book of Common Prayer. London, 1775. Note on the Great Bible.

the adopted text. The fact that each psalm has passed through four hands is some guarantee that no alteration has been made upon light grounds.

It is hoped that by this means something may have been gained for the edification of the general reader by putting before him a clear and intelligible text, and by throwing such light upon the times and circumstances of the several Psalms as may suffice to remove some of the difficulties known to every serious student. It was chiefly a sense of these difficulties, that induced the Editors to undertake the labour of which the present volume is the fruit.

Easter, 1867.

ERRATA.

- Page 26, insert note v. 1. *Sons of God, i. e.* celestial Beings spoken of in Scripture as forming the court of God in heaven. Cp. Job i. 6, xxxviii. 7.
- 27, v. 8, insert note, *temple, i. e.* 'palace in heaven.'
 - 40, strophe 11, *for* 'my' and 'mine,' in each case *read* 'My' and 'Mine.'
 - 72, line 5 from bottom, *for* 'Josiah' *read* 'Jonah.'
 - 88, line 7, *for* 'thy staff' *read* 'Thy staff.'
 - 113, insert at top of page after head line § 36. Ps. XLVIII.
 - 154, line 6 from bottom, *for* 'has' *read* 'have.'
 - 178, line 2, *for* 'shall' *read* 'shalt.'
 - 195, line 5 from bottom, *for* 'point' *read* 'points.'
 - 214, ver. 18, *for* 'Ob. xi.' *read* 'Ob. 11.'
 - 285, Ps. CXXV. ver. 3, l. 2, *for* 'wicked,' *read* 'righteous.'
 - 336, line 6, 'Jehovah speaking of him in his 3rd person' to be inserted after 'himself' in line 8.

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THE PSALMS
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PERIOD I.

PSALMS OF DAVID.

PERIOD I.

THE PSALMS OF DAVID AND OF HIS TIME.

OF David we know from the sacred history, that he was the king and the Psalmist of Israel. He was both king and Psalmist in a sense which is true of no other man, and which has gained him the title of Founder of the Hebrew monarchy, and Founder of the Psalter.

As God raised up Moses to give to His people and to His Church an institute of law, so He raised up David to be His Vicegerent and to wield His sceptre upon earth, and further to be the sweet singer of Israel, that in him both His people then and His Church for all time might have a 'rule for uttering its gladness and its glory, its lamentation and its grief.'

Of this king and Psalmist we know further both his character and the circumstances of his life; how God formed that character, and endowed it richly with gifts and capacities and affections manifold, and trained and matured it by circumstances, which brought all those gifts to their perfection. 'He brought him up among the sheep pastures, that the groundwork of his character

might be laid among simple and universal forms of feeling. He took him to the camp and made him a conqueror, that he might be filled with nobleness of soul and ideas of glory. He placed him in the palace, that he might be filled with ideas of majesty and sovereign might. He carried him to the wilderness and placed him in solitudes, that his soul might dwell alone in the sublime conceptions of God and His mighty works; and He kept him there for long years with only one step between him and death, that he might be well schooled to trust and depend upon the providence of God'.¹ Moreover, He framed him of such force both of body and mind, as to stand the natural successor to those great captains and chiefs, who had in earlier times achieved the conquests and maintained the position of the chosen people; of such surpassing grace, as to intertwine his name and his memory amid the very heartstrings of the nation; and withal of such tenderness and depth of emotion, as to make him the faithfullest of friends, the most affectionate of fathers, of subjects the most loyal, and,—whether in pathetic compassion for his people or in the sternness of his rule,—the most royal of kings.

If from this picture of David, which is gathered from the history, we turn to that collection of psalms, formed most probably itself by the union of smaller collections, which from David's great pre-eminence as the Psalmist of Israel has always rightly been called by his name, and if we put to ourselves this question, which of these many psalms bear the impress of his wonderful character, what answer do we receive?

History assigns by name to David that marvellous summary both of his inner and of his outer life, the highest of all autobiographies, bequeathed to us in a double version in the 18th psalm,

¹ Irving. Introduction to Horne on the Psalms.

and in 2 Sam. xxii. ; it further gives us his lament over Saul and Jonathan¹, his lament over Abner², and those last words³, which 'the spirit of Jehovah uttered by his lips' as a parting lesson to the whole nation. The three latter, though not given in the Psalter, have in this version been inserted in those periods of his life to which they respectively belong⁴. Besides these, we find the peculiar marks of David's thought and expression indelibly stamped upon thirteen psalms; his sense of his own dignity of soul, his 'honour'⁵, upon the 7th and 3rd psalms; his belief⁶ that he is set apart by God's grace and wonderfully raised above all other men, upon the 4th and 110th psalms. No king but David had such a sense of his majesty⁷ as is expressed in psalm ci., or of the prophetic⁸ authority with which he meets his enemies, or of tender regard⁹ for his people's welfare, as we find in psalms iii. and iv. The sternness of his rule¹⁰ is marked in psalm iii., his love of nature, springing from his shepherd life, in psalms viii. xix. and xxix. ; perhaps also, in psalm xxiii. The occasion of psalm xxxii. is to be sought in the deep repentance, which is recorded in 2 Sam. xii. ; and of the two psalms, which are joined together in psalm xxiv. of the Psalter, the first (xxiv. 7—10) refers to the carrying up of the ark to Jerusalem, the second (xxiv. 1—6) and psalm xv. concern the qualifications of life and character necessary to those who would worship in that Holy Place or dwell in that Holy City; and the xith, marked as David's by peculiarities of ex-

¹ 2 Sam. i. 19—27.

² 2 Sam. iii. 33, 34.

³ 2 Sam. xxiii. 1—7.

⁴ § 17, 18, 19.

⁵ § 2 Ps. vii. 5, lay mine honour in the dust; § 14 Ps. iii. 3; § 12 Ps. xviii. 43—48; 2 Sam. vi. 21.

⁶ § 15 Ps. iv. 3; § 12 Ps. xviii. 20—30; § 10 Ps. cx. 1; 2 Sam. vi. 21.

⁷ § 12 Ps. xviii. 43—45; 2 Sam. xxiii. 1. 7.

⁸ § 15 Ps. iv. 2—5.

⁹ § 14 Ps. iii. 8; § 7 Ps. xxix. 10; 2 Sam. vi. 18; § 2 Ps. vii. 29.

¹⁰ § 14 Ps. iii. 7; § 12 Ps. xviii. 34—42; § 3 Ps. xxiv. 8; 2 Sam. xxiii. 6, 7,

pression¹ occurring only in David's psalms, belongs to that earlier part of David's life, his persecution by Saul, of which the historical notices are most scanty.

These Psalms at least are conclusively marked as David's, not only by the flood of rich thought, first fully comprehended and taken up into the national life in later times, and by the creative power which gave it such facile expression, but by the imagery in which that thought is clothed. This imagery is peculiar, yet well suited to the life of hardship² and danger which David led. We seem to see him rejoicing that his corn and wine and oil were increased³, and fleeing from his enemies that bend their bow and make ready their arrows upon the string⁴. The words 'shield' and 'rock,' which passed into metaphors in after times, had a reality to a man who for long years carried his life in his hand, and who, as he fled from cave to cave, had no fortress but Jehovah, no panoply but the sure protection of the Almighty. Such figures are nowhere to be found in the earlier but equally warlike songs of Exodus and Judges⁵.

The key-note struck by David in these seventeen psalms reverberates with a hundred varying echoes through the whole Psalter; sometimes loud and clear, as in psalm ii.⁶ and in psalms xxiii. xxvii. lxiv. cxxxviii.⁷; sometimes faintly, as in the fragments inlaid in psalms of a later time⁸.

¹ The linguistic reasons, which have induced Hebrew scholars, with scarcely an exception, to assign at least these Psalms to David, hardly come within the province of this work.

² § 2 Ps. vii. 7; § 1 Ps. xi. 2; § 12 Ps. xviii. 4, 5, 17, 18; § 8 Ps. xix. 5; § 13 Ps. xxxii. 10.

³ § 15 Ps. iv. 8.

⁴ § 1 Ps. xi. 2.

⁵ Ex. xv. Judges v.

⁶ Written, if not by David, in or near his time.

⁷ All written in David's spirit, if not by his pen: all containing much of David's elevation of soul.

⁸ § 11 Ps. lx. 6—9; Ps. lxxviii. 13—18; §§ 142 and 17 Ps. cxliv. 1—11 and 12—15. Compare note on Composite Psalms, § 24 Psalm xxvii.

Small as is the number of Psalms here set down as certainly belonging to David, it is still to be remarked that there is no side of his varied character which does not in them find its expression; that there is no great turning point in his chequered life which is not set forth with a power, such as could only come from a man who had himself lived that life. This is assuredly no slight confirmation of the fact that these Psalms, selected on other grounds as indubitably composed by David, were really his work.

The chronological arrangement of the Psalms has been taken without alteration from Ewald's great work.

NOTE.—Perhaps most readers of the Psalms would be disposed to consider many more than these seventeen as composed by David. It may be so. All that is intended to be asserted here is that these are beyond all reasonable doubt from his pen; for in each and all of them the great heart of the king is manifest; and in none is there any sentiment or expression, which, like vv. 18, 19 of Psalm li.¹, points to a later age. It may be stated again here, once for all, as it has been already stated in the Preface, that there is no intention to press each single conclusion to which Ewald has come. His arrangement has been accepted as a whole; as full of suggestive thought, edifying and generally most satisfactory. He has brought an amount of learning to bear upon this subject, at least equal to that of any other commentator; he is marked by a rare honesty and singleness of purpose; and he has brought into clearer light than any previous writer the greatness of David's reign as the central point of the Hebrew monarchy, and the grandeur of his genius as, if not the author, at least the founder of the Psalter.

¹ § 75. These verses, it may be remarked, are a curious but conclusive proof, either that the verses themselves were a later addition, or that the whole Psalm, though breathing so much of David's spirit, belongs to a later time.

PERIOD I.

PSALMS OF DAVID.

[SECTIONS I—20.]

§ 1. PSALM XI.¹

¹ On the arrangement of the present Psalter, see Appendix A.

THIS Psalm must be referred to the early times of David's life, when he had to maintain an unequal struggle against the unrelenting jealousy of Saul. Well might his friends despair: they were already imperilled on every side² by the treachery of an unscrupulous foe, and now they saw opening before them an interminable vista of dangers, which would be the lot of the righteous in a time of anarchy³ and misrule. But the cowardly fears of his friends, so far from shaking David's trust in God, only give him an occasion for pouring forth in song the firm and simple faith⁴ with which his heart was full.

² *Ps.* 2: cp. 1 Sam. xviii. 9, 11; xix. 1, 11; xxii. 23; xxiii. 12, 19; xxvi. 2; xxvii. 1.

³ *Ps.* 3. Cp. 1 Sam. xxii. 19, 21.

⁴ *Ps.* 1, 6, 8.

I.

The answer of the Psalmist to the despairing words of his companions.

In Jehovah put I my trust! how say ye then to my soul: 1
 "flee, O ye birds, unto your hill"?
 "For lo, the ungodly bend their bow, 2
 they make ready their arrow upon the string,
 to shoot privily at them that are true of heart!"
 "If the foundations be rooted up, 3
 what shall the righteous do?"

II.

He comforteth his soul with the utterance of his deep conviction of the justice of God:

Jehovah is in His holy palace, 4
 the throne of Jehovah is in heaven;
 His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men— 5
 Jehovah trieth the righteous; 6
 but the ungodly and him that loveth wickedness doth His
 soul abhor;
 upon the ungodly He raineth coals of fire and brimstone, 7
 fiery heat is the portion of their cup.

III.

Who careth for the righteous.

For Jehovah is righteous, and loveth righteousness: 8
 whoso is upright shall behold His countenance.

Ver. 1. Safe from the snare of the fowler, who sets his nets on the level ground of the plain; a proverbial expression: the image is continued in ver. 2.

Ver. 3. *foundations*, i. e. of social order; cp. § 38 Ps. lxxv. 4.

Ver. 6. *trieth*=proveth. Cp. James i. 12.

Ver. 7. The ungodly are represented (1) as overwhelmed by fire from heaven (cp. Gen. xix. 24; § 12 Ps. xviii. 12, 13), and (2) as compelled to drink in the deadly air of the Simoom.

§ 2. PSALM VII.

¹ 22. 3, 4.
² A. V.
 See Appen-
 dix B on the
 superscrip-
 tions.

PSALM VII. is referable to the time when David and his band were daily evading the successive snares laid for them by the agents of Saul. It is occasioned by the treachery¹ of a friend, named in the tradition² as Cush, the Benjamite, of whom nothing is known from the history, but who from the fact of his belonging to the tribe of Benjamin was probably an adherent of the Benjamite king.

³ 1 Sam.
 xxiv. 4; xxvi.
 7.

David, in the full consciousness of his own innocence, pours forth his indignation at the thought, that he who spared³ the life of his bitterest foe, should be thus treacherously assailed by those very arts which he himself so carefully eschewed.

⁴ v. 5.
¹ Sam. xvi.
 11.

He appeals to God to come down from heaven and hold a solemn judgment upon earth, where amidst the assembled tribes the integrity of His Anointed⁴ may be proved. He passes in imagination from the close of the judgment to the execution of the sentence, and in the thought of the eternity of God's justice the storm of passion is lulled to rest.

I.

The Psalmist calleth on God to save him and to be his witness that his hands are clean from treachery.

Jehovah, my God! in Thee have I put my trust: 1
save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me!
lest he devour my soul like a lion, 2
and tear it in pieces, while there is none to help!
Jehovah, my God! if I have done any such thing, 3
or if there be any wickedness in my hands;
if I have rewarded evil unto him that dealt friendly with me— 4
nay, I delivered him that without cause is mine enemy—
then let mine enemy persecute my soul and take it, 5
yea, let him tread my life down upon the earth,
and lay mine honour in the dust!

II.

He trusteth his cause to the everlasting justice of God:

Stand up, Jehovah, in Thy wrath, 6
lift up Thyself with vengeance on mine oppressors!
arise up for me, and command judgment!
and let the congregation of the peoples come about Thee, 7
and return Thou above their heads on high!
Jehovah judgeth the peoples; give sentence in my cause,
O Jehovah! 8
according to my righteousness, according to my innocence
be it done unto me!
let the wickedness of the ungodly come to an end, but stablish
Thou the just, 9
Thou righteous God, that triest the very hearts and reins. 10

My shield is with God, 11
 who helpeth them that are true of heart;
 God is a judge of the righteous, 12
 and a God that is angry every day.

III.

Who shall bring the plots of his enemies to nought.

May be he will whet his sword again! 13
 yea, he bendeth his bow and maketh it ready,
 he prepareth for himself weapons of death, 14
 his arrows he maketh arrows of fire,
 but lo! he travaileth with a thing of nought, 15
 he conceiveth destruction and will bring forth deceit;
 he made a grave and digged it deep, 16
 and is fallen into the pit that he had made!
 his mischief shall return upon his own head, 17
 his violence shall fall on his own pate!
 O let me praise Jehovah according to His righteousness, 18
 let me sing praise to the name of Jehovah, the most High!

Ver. 2. *he*: the change from plural to singular obviously points to a special enemy.

Ver. 4. The abruptness with which the Psalmist interrupts the supposition of his treachery by a positive assertion of his generosity, together with metrical reasons, suggested to Ewald the idea that two lines have fallen out, which are thus supplied by a reference to 1 Sam. xxiv. 17:

"If I have rewarded evil unto him that dealt friendly with me,
 [and enmity unto him that is at peace with me;
 yea, if I have not rewarded his evil with good],
 and delivered him that without cause is mine enemy."

Ver. 7. *on high*. The Psalmist in a vision sees God leaving the judgment seat and returning to heaven.

Ver. 11. *with God*=kept in the armoury of God.

Ver. 12. *angry, i. e.* with the wicked, which the A. V. supplies.

Ver. 13. *he, i. e.* mine enemy.

§§ 3—5. PSALMS XXIV. XV. CI.

PSALMS XXIV. XV. CI. are from the period of the establishment of David's kingdom, the capture of Jebus, the triumphal entry of the ark from Kirjath-jearim, and the consecration of the city of David.

By the death of Ishbosheth the throne of Israel was vacant. This throne David, who had lived for seven years as king of the two tribes in Hebron, was called on by the united voice of the nation to fill. Full of the spirit and the power of the King of heaven, whose vicegerent on earth he was now called to be, he fixed upon the great fortress of Jebus, untaken as yet and believed to be impregnable, as his new capital. It was presently taken by Joab, and became from that day the city of David.

But if the earthly king was to have his house there, so also was the heavenly King whose power he wielded: and accordingly David's first thought was to fetch the ark from its exile at Kirjath-jearim. Undaunted by one unsuccessful attempt to bring it up to the holy city, he made fresh preparations for its final entry: nothing was omitted which could render this triumphal procession worthy of the great occasion, which was to lead up the ark of their God unto His dwelling-place in Jerusalem. It was headed by David him-

¹ § 10 Ps. cx. self, in his double character of priest and king¹. Once more was heard the well-known shout which accompanied the raising of the ark during the journeys of the Israelites: "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered. Arise, O Lord, unto Thy rest; Thou and the ark of Thy strength;" and with dances led and accompanied on his harp by the king, amid the pealing of trumpets and the shout as of a mighty host ringing through the valleys of Hinnom and Kidron, they wound their way up the steep ascent to mount Zion.

Though the entire triumphal psalm is not preserved to us, we may form no indistinct idea of what it was, from the description of the holy procession in Chronicles and from the triumphal hymn of the restoration, which has been handed down to us in psalm lxviii. The moment of its entry within the walls is described in the short psalm xxiv. 7—10, which with another short psalm indicating the spirit in which alone they could rightly approach the Holy Place, forms psalm xxiv. of the Authorised Version.

One incident of the procession, at first sight trivial, throws a flood of light, not only upon the dramatic life of the scene, but upon the deep meaning which lay in the new spirit, which filled the soul of David: his reply² to the contemptuous reproach of his wife, Saul's daughter, Michal—that his dancing and playing was before the Lord, that at such a moment of rejoicing he could never seek for himself outward honour from men, gives us at once the clue to

¹ 2 Sam. vi.
20—23.

that spiritual conception of his duties and position, which distinguished David from Saul. It was his spiritual conception of the true Israel,—of the high privileges and duties of worshippers in the holy place, such as we find in psalms xxiv. 1—6 and xv.—and above all of³ the privileges and duties of a king, as one who should carry out Jehovah's counsels upon earth, which distinguished David's reign not only from that of Saul, but from that of all subsequent Jewish monarchs. Hence it was that the pious Israelites of later ages looked forward to the reestablishment of David's kingdom in the person of a descendant of David's house as their highest ideal, the ideal of a kingdom in which Israel should be triumphant over all its foes, and righteousness be established on the earth⁴.

³ Cp. § 6
Ps. ci.

⁴ Cp. notes,
§ 16 Ps. ii.
and § 63 Ps.
lxxii.

§ 3. PSALM XXIV. 7—10.

THIS Psalm was sung at the triumphal¹ entry of the ark into the newly conquered city by two choirs of priests, the one bearing the ark and approaching the gates, the other already stationed there as warders.

The approaching procession gives out its summons to the ancient gates of the fortress Jebus to exalt² themselves for their new King, a mightier King than had ever entered before, Jehovah enthroned upon His ark and going before their army in triumph to take possession. The warders demand in astonishment, who this new King may be? This

¹ 2 Sam. vi.

² Prov. xvii.
19.

demand is answered first by a description of the new and more glorious title, by which from this time forward God was known; no longer, as under the Patriarchs, Elohim, Ex. xv. 3. 'the strong ones'; nor as under Moses³, Jehovah, the Eternal; but JEHOVAH GOD OF HOSTS, the Hosts of battle, the Hosts of heaven and earth. The change is important, and is brought prominently forward in the history⁴; David brought up "the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the Lord of Hosts, that dwelleth between the Cherubim"; and "he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of Hosts!" This Psalm is the solemn inauguration of this new and great Name, thus wonderfully introduced for the first time.

⁴ 2 Sam. vi.
2, 18;
vii. 25, 26.

It was the organisation of David which gave them an army capable of coping with their ancient enemies in a fortress which had defied all previous efforts. This very organisation had seemed to Samuel fraught with danger to the ancient Theocracy, but the truer insight of David and the deep religious feeling of the nation found in it only a new revelation of the majesty of Jehovah, who from this time forward "went⁵ forth with their armies" with this new title, JEHOVAH GOD OF SABAOOTH.

⁵ § 119 Ps.
xliv. 9.

⁶ 7. 6. At the words "thou God of Jacob⁶" the first part comes to a full close. The abrupt transition between the two parts has been by some explained, by supposing the first six verses to have been sung by the congregation, as they wound up the ascent to Sion, by way of prelude: but since the dif-

ference is one, not only of form but of matter, the historical treatment aimed at in the present work compels us to consider them as two separate psalms, of which the inauguration psalm is the earlier; although in later times the two, as referring equally to Sion, may well have been united in a single psalm.

The inauguration Psalm gains greatly in significance by standing alone; indeed the introduction of the new name of Jehovah, God of Hosts, would lose half its meaning, if the name of Jehovah in the well-known sense had occurred before in the same Psalm. That this was the earlier of the two parts is shown by the fact that in it Sion is about to receive the ark and to become the Holy City, while in the later Psalm⁷ it is mentioned in its already well-known character ^{§ 4 xxiv.}_{1-6.} of the Hill of Jehovah and His Holy Place. Again, the didactic character of the later Psalm leads to the conclusion that it was written to supply a lesson, which would first be needed when the increasing fame and grandeur of the Holy Place had attracted thither crowds of worshippers,—the lesson namely, that the only true worshipper is he who is pure in heart and life, and that such, and such only, will receive a blessing.

I.

1st Choir without.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates ; 7
 be ye lift up, ye doors of old,
 that the King of Glory may come in !

2nd Choir within.

Who then is the King of Glory? 8

1st Choir.

It is Jehovah, strong and mighty,
 Jehovah, the mighty in battle.

II.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates, 9
 be ye lift up, ye doors of old,
 that the King of Glory may come in !

2nd Choir.

Who is He, the King of Glory? 10

1st Choir.

It is JEHOVAH, LORD OF HOSTS,
 He is the King of Glory.

Ver. 1. The old doors are to become young again, and to grow to a greater height in honour of the new King. Cp. Prov. xvii. 19. The height of the gates expressed the dignity of the King for whom they were prepared. Hence the Eastern custom of building gates of extraordinary height.

§ 4. PSALM XXIV. 1—6.

IN Psalm XXIV. 1—6 the Psalmist strives to set before
the people the high ideal of the true Israel¹.

Cp. intro-
duction to
§ 5. Ps. xv.

I.

God is Creator of the world: who may come into His presence?

The earth is Jehovah's and all that therein is,	1
the compass of the world and they that dwell therein,	
for he hath founded it upon the seas,	2
and holdeth it fast upon the floods.—	
Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah?	3
Who shall stand in His Holy Place?	

II.

Answer.

Even he that hath clean hands and a pure heart,	4
and lifteth not his mind unto vanity,	
and doth not swear to deceive his neighbour:	
he shall receive blessing from Jehovah,	5
and righteousness from the God of his health;	
these are they that seek Him,	6
that seek Thy face, O God of Jacob!	

Vv. 1. 2. To the Hebrews the earth was a plane surrounded by the ocean stream. Water was everywhere beneath the earth, as rivers and springs showed. The mountains were the pillars that held it in its place. Job xxvi. 11; § 146 Ps. cxxxvi. 6; Prov. viii. 27, 29; Gen. i. 2, 9, 10.

Ver. 5. Right and health or prosperity, righteousness and blessing are often coupled together, as the reward bestowed upon the righteous by God.

Absolute right or righteousness exists eternally in God. In the man who approaches Him and apprehends His righteousness in the grasp of a living faith, it becomes an active principle, rich in fruit, and so is often used in the Psalms as identical with health or blessing. Cp. § 25 Ps. xxiii. 3; § 69

xxii. 32, and especially § 123 cxxxii. 9 and 17: also § 115 Ps. lxvii. 2; Ps. xlii. 11 (Bible Version); Isaiah lviii. 8; Jer. xxx. 17.

The sentiment, if not the actual language of the whole Psalm, are found in Isaiah xxxiii. 14—16:

Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?
 Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?
 he that walketh righteously and speaketh uprightly;
 he that despiseth the gain of oppressions;
 that shaketh his hands from the holding of bribes,
 that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood,
 and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;
 he shall dwell on high;
 his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks,
 bread shall be given him,
 his waters shall be sure.

§ 5. PSALM XV.

THE establishment of the Ark at Jerusalem threw a sanctity over the entire city. The devout began to flock to it, as the centre of the national worship: the worldly and superstitious, from a growing belief in its inviolability. This belief was in David's time doubtless mingled with much lawful reverence, inseparable from the associations of the spot: nor was it till the darker times following the retreat of the Assyrians, who seemed to the Israelites to have shrunk away awe-struck at the majesty of the Holy City¹, that this belief began to degenerate into the fanaticism which drew down the severe denunciations of the prophet Jeremiah². Still David at the very first saw in the belief something far different from the religious conceptions which he wished to see growing up in the city of God, and here for

¹ See § 36 Ps. xlviii. 4, and introduction to Assyrian Pss. §§ 35—38.

² Jer. vii. 3—8; cp. Amos iii. 9—12; Jer. vi. 8.

the second time³ he impressively rebukes this and all other ^{3 Cp. § 4 Ps. xxiv. 1—6.} superstitious feelings to which the new worship may have given rise, by a description of the true worshipper and the true Israelite. As it is not only in David's time that the symbol has been placed above the thing signified and a superstitious efficacy attached to the externals of worship, this Psalm has an equal value for every age, in keeping before the mind that sanctity of life and truth of heart which are the absolute essentials of a spiritual religion.

Jehovah ! who shall dwell beside thy tabernacle ?	1
who shall rest upon thy holy hill ?	
Even he that walketh uprightly and doeth the thing which is	
right,	2
and speaketh the truth from his heart :	
and keepeth not slander upon his tongue,	3
nor doeth evil to his friend,	
nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour ;	
he that scorneth every vile thing,	4
but honoureth them that fear Jehovah ;	
who hath sworn to his own hurt, and changeth not ;	5
he that hath not given his money upon usury,	6
nor taketh reward against the innocent :	
whoso doeth these things shall never fall.	7

Ver. 5. i.e. who abides by his oath, though he afterwards perceives that he has sworn to his own hurt, showing that he looks to his oath rather than his interest.

§ 6. PSALM CI.

¹ זמ. 8. 11.

THE inauguration of Sion as the seat of David¹ and the dwelling of Jehovah was the occasion of this Psalm, which is the true type of all inaugural Odes. Much had been done, much remained to do. The immediate task was to order the king's household², including in an Eastern monarchy the government of the army and the administration of justice³. At such a moment a prince of less noble ambition would have been dazzled with the splendour of victory or have sunk into the pride and sensuality of Eastern royalty—a weaker one would have recoiled from the difficulties before him. David, on the contrary, longs at such a crisis for the strength and enlightenment which come from communion with God. He is the vicegerent of the King of kings. From the study of God's ways he learns the secret of His government. But first he feels that the true governor must be like God, and so he sets an example for all reformers to follow, by aiming first at the reformation of his own heart. No base or ignoble thought must lurk in the soul of the anointed of God. No base or vile thing, be it slanderer, flatterer, or ungodly man, may remain in the Holy Place where God's honour dwelleth.

² זמ. 10.³ זמ. 6—9.

I.

The King, as God's vicerent on earth, must be pure and true;

My song shall be of mercy and judgement; 1
 to Thee, Jehovah, will I sing.
 Let me give heed to the way of godliness,—O when wilt Thou
 come unto me?— 2
 let me walk in my house with a perfect heart! 3
 I will set no unholy thing before mine eyes; 4
 I hate the sin of unfaithfulness, it shall not cleave unto me!
 A heart of guile shall depart from me, 5
 I will not know a wicked thing!

II.

so also the king's house and the king's court.

Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour—him will I destroy; 6
 whoso hath a high look and a proud heart,—I will not
 suffer him; 7
 mine eyes look unto such as are faithful in the land, that they
 may dwell with me; 8
 whoso leadeth a godly life, he shall be my servant. 9
 There shall no deceitful person dwell in my house, 10
 he that telleth lies, shall not tarry in my sight:
 every morning I will pluck up all the ungodly from the land, 11
 that I may root out all wicked doers from the city of
 Jehovah!

Ver. 2. The question, *When wilt Thou come unto me?* which is at the same time a prayer, though parenthetical, expresses the main thought of the psalm. The coming of God prayed for, is not outward or visible by an outward sign, as in 2 Sam. vi. 7, but rather God's spiritual presence, as in Gen. xx. 3 and Exodus xx. 18—24. This is David's continual hope and prayer, that Jehovah may come and abide with him always.

Ver. 6. Compare Prov. vi. 17, 18; xxi. 4; xxviii. 25. In all these passages we find the subtle connexion between the external manifestations of pride and the promptings of a heart swollen with covetousness and self-seeking within.

§§ 7—9. PSALMS OF NATURE.

THE same great feature of the Hebrew character, which marks them out above other nations of antiquity, their belief in the unseen, appears most markedly in their lyric poetry. Equal to that of other nations in the brilliancy of its pictures and the fire of its language, it rises to the height of inspiration and takes its place in the Holy Writings from the fullness and reality of its belief in the presence of God. Even as lyric poems, these Psalms are unsurpassed ; nowhere do we find greater elevation of thought or greater perfection of structure¹. But more than this, the greatness and the glory and the everlasting order of Nature are reflected on the soul of a Poet, already filled with an abiding sense of God's presence. The Poet's soul thus filled with God is either stirred to thought by some great and fearful phænomenon, as in Psalm xxix., or, as in Psalm viii. and xix., he finds truths which other causes had suggested to his mind, illustrated and confirmed by his contemplation of nature. The Hebrew Psalmist can never forget the living God in nature ; he apprehends and paints nature as full of God and revealing God to him in every motion ; and it is only through God that it becomes living and intelligible to him. Hence among the Hebrews, Psalms of Nature rise in reality to be Hymns of Praise.

¹ Cp. note.

§ 7. PSALM XXIX.

THE PRAISE OF JEHOVAH IN THE STORM.

THERE is nothing in all creation which so brings the omnipotence of the God of heaven home to the Hebrews, nothing which makes the connexion between heaven and earth and the effect of heaven upon earth so real, as a thunder-storm. The clouds are His chariot; the lightning is the fire of His nostrils; if He do but touch the hills, they shall smoke. The rarity and violence of such storms in Palestine¹ gave them to the Hebrews a significance elsewhere unknown. Hence it is under this image that they picture to themselves God's most tremendous judgments². "Behold the name of the Lord cometh from far, burning with His anger; His lips are full of indignation and His tongue is a devouring fire; and His breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck." * * * "And the Lord shall cause His glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of His arm with the indignation of His anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering and tempest and hailstones."

¹Cp. Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, c. ii. p. 124.

²Cp. Isa. xxx. 27—30.

I.

The Psalmist calleth on the angels round the throne to bow down and worship Jehovah, when He shall reveal Himself in thunder and lightning to the world.

Give unto Jehovah, ye sons of God,	I
give unto Jehovah glory and strength!	
Give unto Jehovah the honour due unto His name,	2
worship Jehovah in holy apparel!	

II.

HARK! JEHOVAH is above the waters, 3

The God of Glory thundered,

Jehovah above the waterfloods;

HARK! JEHOVAH is in power, 4

HARK! JEHOVAH is in majesty.

HARK! JEHOVAH—He breaketh the cedar-trees, 5

how Jehovah breaketh in pieces the cedars of Lebanon,

and maketh them to skip like calves, 6

Lebanon also and Sirion like young buffaloes;

HARK! JEHOVAH how He flasheth forth flames of fire!

HARK! JEHOVAH shaketh the wilderness, 7

Jehovah shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh;

HARK! JEHOVAH maketh the hinds to calve, 8

and strippeth the forests of their leaves;

while in His temple everything shouteth, 'Glory!'

III.

Jehovah ruled above the mighty flood; 9

so ruleth Jehovah as a King for ever!

Jehovah will give strength unto His people, 10

Jehovah shall give His people the blessing of peace!

Ver. 3. *Hark! Jehovah* = the voice of Jehovah, or Jehovah revealed in thunder.

Ver. 8. Cp. Isaiah vi. 3, And the Seraphim cried one with another and said, Holy, Holy, Holy is Jehovah, God of Hosts; His glory the fullness of the earth.

NOTE.

The closest examination of this Psalm only reveals more strikingly the perfection of its structure. It has the regular form of the psalm or triumphal ode and is divided into three members:

I. The Prelude, in which the Psalmist calls on the angels round the throne to do homage to Jehovah, when He shall reveal Himself in thunder and lightning to the world.

II. The body of the Psalm, in three equal strophes, each of five lines, marking the successive stages of the storm; 1st, its distant gathering; the low faint muttering of the thunder in the far off unapproachable realms of sky; 2nd, its sudden advance, seizing the mountains and crushing the cedars; then, in the 3rd, it passes on and spreads over the plain and dies away; thus making the whole universe to tremble from sky to earth, from Lebanon in the north to the wilderness of Kadesh in the south. These contain the revelations of Jehovah to man, issued like royal mandates in peals of thunder.

Nay more, each of these strophes is itself divided into five lines, and each line begins with a fresh burst of the storm.

In strophe 1 we have in the first line the distant muttering of the thunder; the peal becomes louder and clearer in lines 2 and 3; and in lines 4 and 5 rings with ever-increasing and more continuous roll, the voice of Jehovah, through the world.

In strophe 2 the storm falls with its crashing power on the cedars; then with bounding speed upon the mountains themselves, making them to skip like buffaloes; ending with the flashing of the forked lightning.

In strophe 3 we have the same structure; the sound of Jehovah making the wilderness to tremble, sweeping in jubilant might from Lebanon to Kadesh; bowing the very beasts in the throes of labour, while the hurricane strips the forest of its leaves, till it is hushed and lost in the diapason, which through all the world telleth of His glory.

III. The conclusion, that men may learn the protecting love of Jehovah; who though He sitteth a King above the mighty flood, shall give strength unto His people and the blessing of peace.

§ 8. PSALM XIX.

THE PRAISE OF JEHOVAH IN THE FIRMAMENT AND IN
THE LAW.

AS Psalm XXIX was called forth by storm and tempest, so the theme of this Psalm is the calm bright sky such as sheds its splendour every day over Palestine. Unchangeable in its everlasting radiance, the most eloquent witness to the glory of God the Creator, it draws the mind of man with silent but irresistible power from the visible to the invisible, from itself to the whole universe.

In this Psalm—in the form at least in which it has come down to us—we find in striking contrast two distinctive modes of Hebrew feeling; the older feeling, which saw God revealed in Nature, the later, culminating in the later times of the monarchy, which saw God revealed in the Law. Of the former, which belongs to the time of David, these Psalms of Nature are the grandest specimens; of the latter, Psalm

¹ Cp. note.

cxix¹ is the full developement. The placing side by side these two ideas is not without its beauty and its interest; and is due to the later period when the nation looked rather to the study of the Law than to the world around them for the revelation of God.

I.

The glory of God in Creation.

The heavens declare the glory of God,	1
the firmament showeth His handywork,	
day unto day uttereth speech,	2
night unto night revealeth knowledge ;	
they have neither speech, nor language,	3
neither are their voices heard,	
but their sound is gone forth through all lands,	4
and their words into the ends of the world,	
where the sun hath a tabernacle to take his rest.	5

II.

And he steppeth like a bridegroom from his chamber,	
and boundeth like a giant to run his course ;	
from the uttermost part of the heaven he hath his rising,	6
and his circuit even unto the end of it again ;	
and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.	

* * * * *

III.

The glory of God in His law.

The law of Jehovah is perfect, and refresheth the soul,	7
the testimony of Jehovah is true, and giveth wisdom unto	
the simple ;	
the statutes of Jehovah are right and rejoice the heart,	8
the commandment of Jehovah is pure and giveth light unto	
the eyes ;	
the fear of Jehovah is clean and endureth for ever,	9
the judgments of Jehovah are true and righteous altogether,	
more to be desired are they than gold, yea than much fine	
gold,	10
sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.	

IV.

Moreover by them is Thy servant taught :	11
and in keeping of them there is great reward !	
Who can tell how oft he offendeth ?	12
O cleanse Thou me from the sin that I wist not of !	
Keep thy servant also from presumptuous men, lest they get	
dominion over me !	13
then shall I be innocent and free from great transgression !	
Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be	
acceptable in Thy sight,	14
Jehovah, my rock and my redeemer !	15

Note. Cp. Preface to § 130 Psalm cxix.

Ver. 4. The sun has pitched his tent in the heavens, at the end of the world, the western horizon, in which after his daily journey he sinks to rest.

Ver. 6. The train of thought in vv. 1—6 is manifestly incomplete; the idea of v. 2 is not carried out; we are not told, as we should expect after v. 6, how the night teaches the glory of God. We see from § 9 Psalm viii. 3, "The moon and the stars which thou hast ordained," that the night also teaches His glory, differently perhaps but not less powerfully; which suggests the idea, that some such beautiful words are lost after v. 6 of this Psalm. The construction of the strophe leads us to the same conclusion, that four lines are lost, which would suffice for the expression of the missing sense.

Ver. 7. The 3rd and 4th strophes are separated from the first part of the psalm by the strongest divergence both of sentiment and language. The changed rhythm and the artificial structure of the 2nd part contrasts strongly with the simpler and more powerful language of the first; while the fears of the Psalmist, that with the ever-growing anxiety to satisfy the minutiae of a written Law his own unconscious sins against these prohibitions would also increase, and that he may be led away by the seductive or constraining influence of evil men—the name given in later Psalms to such as inclined to heathenism,—belong to the period of the end of the monarchy.

Ver. 8. "*giving light unto the eyes*" might mean, as in § 27 Ps. xiii. 3 and Ezra ix. 8, giving light to eyes growing dim from sorrow. But in this connexion, where the Psalmist is speaking of the teaching and commandments of Jehovah, it is clearly the eyes of the understanding which are meant.

Ver. 13. It was no easy task in those times to keep free from the seduction or constraint of the great men who inclined to heathenism. Hence the frequent prayers of later Psalmists for strength; § 48 Ps. liv. 1—3; § 41 cxli. 4; they felt that only by escaping this temptation could they avoid great transgression; and that unconscious sins were more pardonable than a conscious leaning towards the ways of the heathen. This fear of falling away into heathenish ways increased still more, when the newly built Jerusalem was actually under the dominion of the heathen, § 92 Ps. cxxv. 3.

Ver. 14. The words of this address to Jehovah are taken from § 12 Ps. xviii. 2; which suggests the idea that the later Psalmist found that psalm in the same series with the Davidic psalm, to which he appended the conclusion contained in vv. 7—15.

§ 9. PSALM viii.

THE PRAISE OF JEHOVAH IN THE CREATION OF MAN.

THE same spiritual truth which is given in the ¹first ^{1 Gen. i. 26, 27.} page of Scripture, that God made man in His own image, flashes forth in this Psalm in true lyric grandeur, a ray of light across the dark mystery of creation.

This truth has been worthily expressed in some of the noblest ²poems in our language, in which the proof of our ²See note. heavenly origin is sought in the unsoiled purity of our infancy, in its simplicity and obedience, in the consciousness that its life is bounded by love, in its unruffled serenity and the fullness of its joy. But it is here that we find the first and grandest expression of this truth,—the outcome of that Hebrew inspiration, which in an age of darkness seized upon the sublimest spiritual truths and revealed them to mankind. We learn here what is nature and what is law; what is degeneracy and breach of law; and that God has

ordained for Himself in the unconscious praise of their Creator from the mouths of babes and sucklings a stronghold against the noisy clamour of apostate men, who rebel against the divine order and lay upon God the blame of their own aberration from His order. The Psalm then becomes a Hymn of praise to God.

I.

Jehovah, our Lord !	1
how excellent is Thy name in all the earth,	
Thou, whose glory is high above the heavens !	
Out of the mouth of very babes and sucklings	2
hast Thou ordained a stronghold for Thyself, because of	
Thine enemies,	
that Thou mightest still the enemy and revengeful man !	

II.

When I consider the heavens, the work of Thy fingers,	3
the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained ;	
what is man that Thou art mindful of him,	4
and the son of man that Thou visitest him,	
and madest him a little lower than God ;	5
and crownedst him with glory and honour ;	
and madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy	
hands,	6
and didst put all things in subjection under his feet,	
all sheep and oxen,	7
yea, even the wild beasts of the field,	
the fowls of the air and the fishes of the sea,	8
and whatsoever walketh through the paths of the seas ?	

III.

Jehovah, our Lord !

9

how excellent is Thy name in all the earth !

Ver. 1. Gen. i. 26.

Ver. 2. By H. Vaughan in the *Retreat*.

Happy those early days, when I
 shined in my Angel-infancy !
 before I understood this place
 appointed for my second race,
 or taught my soul to fancy aught
 but a white, celestial thought ;
 when yet I had not walked above
 a mile or two from my first Love,
 and looking back, at that short space
 could see a glimpse of his bright face ;
 when on some gilded cloud or flower
 my gazing soul could dwell an hour,
 and in these weaker glories spy
 some shadows of eternity ;
 before I taught my tongue to wound
 my conscience with a sinful sound,
 or had the black art to dispense
 a several sin to every sense,
 but felt through all this fleshly dress
 bright shoots of everlastingness.

O how I long to travel back
 and tread again that ancient track !
 that I might once more reach that plain
 where first I left my glorious train ;
 from whence the enlightened spirit sees
 that shady city of Palm-trees !
 but ah ! my soul with too much stay
 is drunk, and staggers in the way :—
 some men a forward motion love,
 but I by backward steps would move ;
 and when this dust falls to the urn,
 in that state I came, return.

And by Wordsworth, in his great *Ode on intimations of Immortality from recollections of Early Childhood*.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
the soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
hath had elsewhere its setting
and cometh from afar;
not in entire forgetfulness
and not in utter nakedness,
but trailing clouds of glory do we come
from God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
upon the growing boy,
but he beholds the light and whence it flows,
he sees it in his joy;
the youth who daily from the East
must travel, still is Nature's priest,
and by the vision splendid
is on his way attended;
at length the man perceives it die away
and fade into the light of common day.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own
yearnings she hath in her own natural kind;
and even with something of a mother's mind
and no unworthy aim,
the homely nurse doth all she can
to make her foster-child, her inmate, Man,
forget the glories he hath known
and that imperial palace whence he came.
Behold the child among his new-born blisses
a six years darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies
fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
with light upon him from his father's eyes!
See at his feet some little plan or chart,
some fragment of his dream of human life,
shaped by himself with newly learned art;
a wedding or a festival,
a mourning or a funeral;

and this hath now his heart,
 and unto this he frames his song :
 then will he fit his tongue
 to dialogues of business, love or strife;
 but it will not be long
 e'er this be thrown aside,
 and with new joy and pride
 the little actor cons another part;
 filling from time to time his 'humorous stage'
 with all the persons down to palsied Age,
 that life brings with her in her equipage;
 as if his whole vocation
 were endless imitation.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
 thy soul's immensity;
 thou best philosopher who yet dost keep
 thy heritage, thou eye among the blind,
 that deaf and silent read'st the eternal deep,
 haunted for ever by the eternal Mind,—
 Mighty prophet! Seer blest!
 on whom those truths do rest
 which we are toiling all our lives to find;
 thou, over whom thy immortality
 broods like the day, a master o'er a slave,
 a presence which is not to be put by;
 thou little child, yet glorious in the might
 of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
 why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
 the years to bring the inevitable yoke,
 thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
 Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,
 and custom lie upon thee with a weight
 heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

§§ 10—12. PSALMS CX. LX. XVIII.

DAVID'S GREAT WARS AGAINST THE HEATHEN.

§ 10. PSALM CX.

THE king is setting forth to war after prayer and sacrifice ; the Prophet promises the help of Jehovah, whom in a bold figure he describes as driving to the battle in his chariot of war, with the king, as his earthly vicegerent, seated at his side¹. Fired by this thought, the imagination of the poet pictures the fight and the victory. He sees the king grasping the sacred sceptre and asserting his supremacy over his foes². He sees the troops glittering in their armour, like victims decked for the sacrifice, ready to go in jeopardy of their lives for their God and for their king, brilliant and countless as dew-drops of the summer morn³.

Here the Psalmist pauses in his song of triumph, to begin a second strophe, as he had begun the first, with a fresh promise from Jehovah, that the golden age of the Patriarchs is to be realized once more and David is to be the priest as well as the king of the nation⁴.

Then he returns to the thought of the impending battle, and shews that the promise was not to be barren of result ; that the king's new inviolability would be vindicated on the battle-field ; that the God, whose priest he was, would fight beside him and would assert His supremacy over the kings of the Heathen by a judgment which would cover the field with the slain⁵.

¹ 27. 1, 5.² 27. 2.³ 27. 3.⁴ 27. 4.⁵ 27. 5, 6.

I.

The Psalmist relateth God's promise of help, the presage of victory, and the mustering of the troops.

Jehovah saith unto my lord; "Sit thou on My right hand, 1
 "until I make thine enemies thy footstool."
 Jehovah shall send thee the sceptre of power out of Sion: 2
 be thou ruler in the midst among thine enemies!
 Thy people are a free-will offering in thy day of battle; 3
 in holy array, as dew-drops from the womb of the morning,
 thou hast the bands of thy warriors.

II.

He appealeth to God's declaration of the sacredness of the King's office; then returneth to the description of the battle-field.

Jehovah hath sworn and will not repent: 4
 "thou art a priest for ever
 "after the order of Melchizedek!"
 The Lord upon thy right hand 5
 smiteth in sunder kings in the day of His wrath.
 He shall judge among the heathen—the field is full of the
 slain,— 6
 He smiteth heads in sunder over a wide country:

III.

The pursuit.

he shall drink of the brook in the way, 7
 therefore shall he lift up his head.

Ver. 1. For a similar picture of God's leadership of the Israelite host, cp. § 119 Ps. xlv. 10; 2 Sam. v. 24, and Deut. ix. 3; Judg. iv. 14; Isa. lii. 12, &c.

Ver. 3. Literally, "in holy array, from the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth." Youth is used in the collective sense of "youthful warriors."

There are two prominent ideas in the metaphor of the dew, (1) its numberless drops, (2) its refreshing influence.

The king need have no anxiety about the insufficiency of his force: the troops, so far from dwindling away or being scattered from him, will take their stand in numbers on the morning of the battle, armed and eager for the fight; a sight as refreshing to his eyes as dew-drops to the parched ground.

Ver. 4. The transition is, "Thou who hast been a warrior art now a priest as well." For the military character of the Hebrew priesthood, see Appendix C. The union of priesthood and kingship in David was more complete than in any other sovereign of Judah. At the election of Saul the two offices were entirely distinct: and Saul's attempted usurpation of the priestly functions was severely rebuked and punished, 1 Sam. xiii. 9. This possibly was not without effect in causing the massacre of the priests at Nob; certainly after the massacre the hopes of the priesthood were centred in David, as their protector and future king. Cp. 1 Sam. xxiii. 6, 9; 1 Chron. xii. 27. After this David was recognised as the head of the priesthood, offered sacrifices, 2 Sam. vi. 14—18, and delivered the priestly benediction. So also Solomon, 2 Chron. vi. 3. Though the offices were never subsequently separated in the popular mind, there was occasionally strong antagonism between them, as in the case of Uzziah. See *Biblical Dictionary*, articles 'David' and 'Priest.'

For ever, an unlimited time of which the prophet does not see or wish to see the end; cp. the common wish "May the king live for ever." 1 Kings i. 31, &c. Cp. also, § 22 Ps. xxi. 4; § 23 xlv. 3; § 49 lxi. 7; Prov. xxix. 14, &c. *order*, i. e. manner. Thou art a priest-king as Melchisedek was.

Ver. 6. Under the expression "smiteth heads in sunder over a far country," the Psalmist describes the appalling appearance of the field after the utter destruction of the kings, the signs of which are seen throughout the whole course of the pursuit. The second line of this verse is a repetition in calmer language of the second line of verse 5.

Ver. 7. *he*, that is, "the king;" for the significance of the change from "thou" to "he," cp. ver. 6, and § 21 Ps. xx. 9, note. The king is not to lose the fruits of victory by thirst or weariness under the Eastern sun: his head shall not droop, "for the brook which he passes on the borders shall sustain him as he drives his foe far beyond the limits of the land;" for the need, compare how David longed in the heat for the water of the well of Bethlehem (2 Sam. xxiii. 15); how Jonathan and the people were "faint and distressed" in the pursuit from Michmash (1 Sam. xiv. 24, 29, 30, 31); and how the people had murmured of old on account of the terrible thirst in the wilderness (Ex. xv. 22), till they too were relieved by the sustaining brook of Massah (Ex. xvii. 6). This last short strophe depicts as it were the calm after the storm, when the Psalmist sees clearly in faith the battle ended and the good irresistibly triumphant.

§ 11. PSALM LX.

THE shape in which this Psalm has come down to us is one of many indications of the living interest which the Hebrews took in their past history¹. Old promises were employed either to sustain the national faith or, as here, as a pathetic appeal to God, by contrasting their present abject condition with the glorious hopes of the past.

But while the Psalm in its present form is evidently due to the period of their Dispersion, the most striking passage, which forms its centre² and which is also quoted in another Psalm³, is no less evidently due to the time of David. The general correspondence of the facts mentioned in this central portion of the Psalm with the circumstances of David's time would lead us to assign it to that period, even if it were not corroborated by a curious historical fragment, which has in the Bible been prefixed to the Psalm as its superscription⁴.

It was obviously written at a time of extreme danger, and when David himself was in great trouble. The kingdom was threatened on all sides. While⁵ the king was campaigning in the north against the Syrians, the Edomites had risen in rebellion in the south; and he was so hard pressed that he hardly knew whether an army could be spared to go against them.

In the midst of his deep affliction he went to enquire of Jehovah, and was comforted by a prophetic utterance of favourable import. Thus he springs at once from the depth of despair to the height of joyous confidence; and this⁶

¹ See note (1).² vv. 6—10.³ §143 Ps. cviii.⁴ See note (2).⁵ Cp. 2 Sam. viii. 3—16.⁶ vv. 6—10.

v. 9. fragment composed at the time breathes David's unshaken⁷
faith and trust in God.

I.

O God, Thou hast cast us out, and scattered us abroad ; 1
Thou hast been displeased ; O stablish us again !
Thou hast made the earth to tremble and rent it asunder ; 2
heal the breaches thereof, for it shaketh !
Thou hast shown thy people heavy things ; 3
Thou hast given us a drink of bewildering wine,
Thou hast given a banner to such as fear Thee, 4
yet only that they should flee before the bow of their enemies :
that Thy beloved may be delivered, 5
help with Thy right hand and hear us !

II.

God spake in His sanctuary,—let me rejoice thereat,— 6
“I will divide Shechem,
and mete out the valley of Succoth !
Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine. 7
Ephraim also is the defence of my head,
Judah is my sceptre !
As for Moab, it is my washpot, 8
upon Edom will I cast out my shoe :
wail aloud because of me, Philistia !”

III.

Who will lead me to a strong city ? 9
Who will bring me into Edom ?
Is it not Thou, O God, who hast cast us off, 10
and goest not forth, O God, with our hosts ?
Give us help against the oppressor, 11
for vain is the help of man !
through God we shall gain the victory, 12
and He shall tread down our enemies !

Note (1) on Composite Psalms. We find more than one instance of Psalms put together by later Psalmists from fragments of earlier Psalms. This very fragment of Psalm lx. 6—10, which, viewing it historically, brings it amongst David's Psalms, is joined by a later Psalmist to vv. 8—12 of § 52 Psalm lvii., and the two fragments, thus joined, form § 143 Psalm cviii. of the Authorised Version.

The 144th Psalm of the Authorised Version [§§ 142, 17] is put together from two psalms, one of which is from the latest time of the restoration, the other from the period of Solomon.

So also § 24 Psalm xxvii. See note there; for other instances.

Note (2). The superscription. A golden Psalm of David. For teaching.
When he strove with Aram of the two rivers
[the Syrians of Mesopotamia] and with Aram
of Zobah; when Joab returned and smote of
Edom in the valley of Salt twelve thousand.

Ver. 4. The original is a play upon words, "A flag not to conquer, but to flag before the enemy."

Ver. 6. *Let me rejoice.* These words are spoken by the Psalmist.

Ver. 6. Shechem and Succoth, as ancient towns on either side of Jordan, stand for the whole of Canaan, which God will mete out for Himself, so that no enemy can take it.

Ver. 7. Gilead and Manasseh are mine: Ephraim is my helmet; Judah is my sceptre—but as for my enemies, Moab shall be my washpot, Edom shall acknowledge me conqueror, and Philistia shall bewail her defeat.

Ver. 8. The ignominious vassalage of Moab and Edom is depicted under the image (1) of the washpot, in which the conqueror returning in triumph washed off the sweat of battle, and (2) of the ground on which [some say, the slave to whom] he flung his sandals.

Ver. 10. The sudden change from the singular to the plural pronoun seems to mark the division between the older and the later poet. In verse 9, it is David who speaks; from verse 10 to the end, it is the congregation of Israel which prays for help. How much of the introduction and conclusion in the Psalm, as it stands at present, is from the hand of David, it is impossible to say. The general character of both may be gathered generally from the 3rd and 4th Psalms, which were composed by David under similar circumstances; but the whole Psalm in its present form belongs to the class which looks back from the troublous times of the restoration with longing hope that the glorious time of David may come back.

§ 12. PSALM XVIII.

THIS, the longest and noblest of all David's Psalms, was, as we learn from its conclusion, sung in the last years of prosperity which crowned his life, when the surrounding nations had become his tributaries and distant nations hastened to do him homage. Thus it is a fervent outpouring of gratitude not for a single deliverance, but for all the deliverances of his chequered life.

The form in which this thanksgiving is cast is essentially characteristic. David loved to dwell upon the phænomena of the natural world, not merely for their own beauty or grandeur, but because they were revelations of the goodness and omnipotence of God. The sun by day, the moon by night,¹ the innocence of childhood, the nature of man,² are appointed witnesses to the beneficence of the Creator and His love to man: storm and thunder attest His personal interposition in the world, nay, His very presence on the earth.³ As David had described the actual storm to portray the omnipotence of God, so here an imaginary tempest is the vehicle in which he used to convey to himself and others the lessons of his eventful life from its rise amidst the sheepfolds to its close amidst the glories of a prosperous reign. He dwells upon his history in the consciousness that his had been no ordinary life: that as king of the nation appointed to be the bearer of God's true religion to the world, he could claim and had enjoyed His special protection. The unfolding of

¹ § 8 Ps. xix.

§ 9 Ps. viii.

² § 9 Ps. viii.³ § 7 Ps. xxix.

a page in the history of God's kingdom in the world, had depended on the preservation and prosperity of his life, and thus the powers of death and hell had not prevailed against it; nay more, the descent of the Almighty in wrath to deliver him was in his eyes a solemn vindication of the divine order against the futile opposition of man.

It was this moral purpose of Jehovah's coming to judgment which gives its grandeur to this sublime picture of earthquake and tempest.

The structure of this Psalm is equal to its subject. Composed in all probability for some great festival it has all the regularity of structure which such an occasion would demand, and begins, as might be expected, with an exordium of unusual solemnity ⁴. The key-note struck in the exordium ⁴ *vv.* 1, 2, is the special protection of God. This protection in its relation to the king gives the real connexion to the varying and apparently unconnected strophes which form the body of the Psalm ⁵. ⁵ *vv.* 3—46.

Overwhelmed by a sea of trouble and sinking to the very gates of hell, he cries to Jehovah. God hears from His palace on high and descends to rescue His beloved servant with all the artillery of heaven ⁶. ⁶ *v.* 19.

From God, the only Giver of true strength and victory, the Psalmist passes to the man who alone can receive it, and realizes the connexion between human holiness and divine favour. God was true to David because David had striven to be true to Him, and to walk before Him with clean hands and a pure heart ⁷. ⁷ *v.* 30.

Therefore it was that God had given him strength to
^{1 vv. 39, 49.} drive his enemies before him⁷; and thus the Psalm returns
^{8 vv. 47—51.} at its close to the note of praise with which it began⁸.

I.

The Psalmist calleth upon God his deliverer;

I love Thee with all my heart, O Jehovah, my strength ! 1
Jehovah, Thou art my rock and my defence,
 Thou art my saviour and redeemer,
 Thou art my God and rock on whom I trust,
 my shield and the horn of my health,
my fortress and refuge, Thou art my helper, 2
 who helpest me from wrong !
I will call upon Jehovah, which is worthy to be praised.
 So shall I be safe from my enemies !

II.

who hath rescued him from all the perils of his life.

The billows had surrounded me, 3
 floods of ungodliness made me afraid,
the chains of hell had encompassed me, 4
 the net of death had fallen upon me :
in my trouble I cry unto Jehovah, 5
 and complain aloud to my God.
He heareth my cry from His palace, 6
 my complaint entereth even into His ears ;
and the earth trembleth and quaketh, 7
 and the pillars of heaven shake,
 yea, they tottered—because He was wroth !
There went up a smoke from His nostrils, 8
 and a consuming fire out of His mouth,
 a blast of burning coals.

III.

He bowed the heavens also and came down, 9
 —clouds and darkness under His feet;
 He rode upon a cherub and did fly, 10
 He rode upon the wings of the wind.
 He maketh darkness to be His covering, 11
 His pavilion round about Him,
 —dark waters and thick clouds—
 at the brightness of His presence, His thick clouds passed
 away, 12
 —hailstones and coals of fire—
 Jehovah also thundereth from heaven, 13
 and the Highest giveth forth His voice,
 —hailstones and coals of fire!

IV.

He sent forth His arrows and scattered them, 14
 He hurled forth His lightning and discomfited them. 15
 Then were there seen the depths of the sea,
 and the foundations of the earth were laid bare:
 —at Thy chiding, O Jehovah,
 at the blast of the breath of Thy nostrils!
 He putteth down His hand from on high and taketh me up, 16
 and draweth me out of many waters;
 He delivereth me from my cruel enemy, 17
 from them that hate me, for they be too strong for me.
 They fell upon me in the day of my trouble; 18
 but then Jehovah was my stay,
 He brought me forth into a place of liberty, 19
 yea, He bringeth me forth because He loveth me.

V.

For according to the character of every man, so doth God reveal Himself unto him;

Jehovah rewardeth me after my righteous dealing, 20
according to the cleanness of my hands doth he recompense me,
because I have kept the way of Jehovah, 21
and have not forsaken my God, as the wicked doth;
for I have an eye unto all His laws, 22
and I cast not his commandments from me:
I was also uncorrupt before Him, 23
and kept myself from mine iniquity;
and so Jehovah rewarded me after my righteous dealing, 24
according to the cleanness of my hands—in His sight.

VI.

To the holy Thou shewest Thyself holy, 25
and upright towards the upright man;
to the pure Thou shewest Thyself pure, 26
and to the froward as full of frowardness.
Yea, Thou helpst them that are bowed down, 27
and bringest down the high looks of the proud;
Thou also makest my candle to shine. 28
Jehovah is my God; He maketh my darkness to be light!
For in Thee I scatter hosts of men, 29
and with the help of my God I leap over the walls of
mine enemies;
as for God—His way is upright, 30
the word of Jehovah is tried in the fire.
He is a shield to all them that trust in Him!

VII.

and giveth David strength to subdue his enemies and make the nations his tributaries.

For who is God save Jehovah, 31
 who is a rock except our God?
 He is the God who hath girded me with strength, 32
 and cleared my way before me,
 He made my feet like harts' feet;
 and setteth me upon the high places of the land; 33
 He traineth mine hands to war, 34
 so that mine arms should bend even a bow of steel;
 Thou hast given me the shield of Thy salvation, 35
 Thy right hand upholdeth me,
 Thy graciousness doth lift me up!

VIII.

Thou hast made room enough under me for me to go, 36
 that my footsteps slip not;
 I follow after mine enemies and overtake them, 37
 and turn not again till I have destroyed them,
 yea, until I have smitten them that they cannot stand, 38
 but fall under my feet!
 For Thou girdest me with strength unto the battle, 39
 Thou bowest down mine enemies under me;
 Thou madest my foes to turn their backs before me, 40
 as for them that hate me—I utterly destroy them.

IX.

They cry aloud, but there is none to help them,— 41
 yea, even to Jehovah, but He doth not hear;
 so that I beat them small as the dust of the earth, 42
 and stamp them under foot as the mire of the streets!

Thou deliverest me from the strivings of the people, 43
 Thou preservest me to be head over the nations.
 A people whom I knew not, do me service; 44
 as soon as they hear, they are obedient unto me, 45
 even the sons of strangers do me homage,
 yea, the sons of strangers fade away, 46
 they come forth trembling from their strongholds!

X.

The Psalmist returneth to the praise of God, his deliverer.

Long live Jehovah! blessed be my rock, 47
 and praised be the God of my salvation!
 even the God that saw that I was avenged, 48
 and subdued the nations under me;
 it is Thou who deliverest me from my enemies, 49
 yea, and settest me up above mine adversaries,
 and riddest me from the violent man!
 Therefore do I praise Thee, O Jehovah! among the nations, 50
 and play and sing praise unto Thy name!
 great prosperity giveth He unto His king, 51
 and sheweth loving-kindness to His anointed,
 unto David and his seed for ever!

Ver. 7. The heaven was represented by the Hebrews as resting on the hills as its foundation: hence they are called the pillars of heaven. Cp. Job xxvi. 11, "The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at His reproof."

Ver. 10. The cherubim formed the moving throne of God. Cp. Ezek x. 1, "Behold in the firmament, which was above the head of the cherubim, there appeared as it were a sapphire stone as the appearance of the likeness of a throne."

Ver. 12. *Hailstones*. Hail was rare in Palestine and so regarded with greater awe. Cp. § 7 Ps. xxix. Introduction.

Ver. 19. A place of liberty is opposed to the narrow abyss in which the

Psalmist had lain. Cp. Psalm xxxi. "Thou hast not shut me up—Thou hast set my feet in a large room."

Ver. 23. *Mine iniquity, i.e.* from the sin which most easily besets me.

Ver. 25. That God's revelation of Himself in the soul and in the world depends upon the character of man, and that man's conception of God rises or falls with his moral life, is a decree of eternal justice. The converse of this, that our moral nature rises or falls with our conception of God is equally true: for "man must needs assimilate himself to what he worships." This is well expressed by Professor Kingsley: "It makes him at last like the false God whom he is preaching (for every man at last copies the God in whom he believes), dark and deceiving, proud and cruel."

Ver. 30. *i.e.* is tried and standeth the test.

Ver. 32. *i.e.* letteth nothing hinder me in marching against mine enemies.

Ver. 33. The armies of the Israelites consisted entirely of infantry at this time, and the possession of the heights secured the possession of the country.

Ver. 35. *graciousness, i.e.* Thy condescending kindness doth make me great.

Ver. 49. Plainly to be treated generally and not of a particular enemy, as Saul.

§ 13. PSALM XXXII.

THE occasion of this Psalm is undoubtedly to be sought in 2 Sam. xxii.

The secrecy¹ which shrouded the king's sin prevented for a time its producing any effect in the world. Within¹² himself it bore its natural fruits, anguish of soul and body², ^{2 v. 3.} until his slumbering spirit was at length aroused by the apologue of the prophet. The peace and cheerfulness³ ^{3 v. 1, 2, & 6.} which followed his confession of his guilt and the prophet's assurance of divine pardon, are known to every one from the history, but the previous effects of the sin upon his own heart find no record but here.⁴

⁴ 27. 3 and 4.

From its penitential character this Psalm is often classed

- > § 75. with the 51st⁵, from which in many important features it is entirely different. The 51st was composed during the very bitterness of a struggle in the soul, abounds in personal experience, and is a confession of guilt to God. Here the conflict has ended, and the personal experience is introduced solely to impart to the world the eternal truths impressed on the Psalmist's soul, viz. that it is the privilege of man, as a being endowed with reason, to live in communion with God⁶, and that there is no happiness for man without openness before God, and truthful dealing with his own soul.
- z. 10.

I.

Happy is he who deceiveth not himself before God.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,	1
and whose sin is covered :	
blessed is the man to whom Jehovah imputeth no guilt,	2
and in whose spirit is no self-deceiving.	

II.

Experience of the Psalmist.

While I held my tongue my bones consumed away	3
through my daily complaining ;	
for thy hand was heavy upon me day and night,	4
my moisture became like the drought in summer.	
I acknowledge my sin to Thee, and hide not my guilt,	5
I said, "I will confess my faults to Jehovah,"	6
and Thou forgavest the wickedness of my sin.	

III.

Prayer that all may turn to God while there is time.

For this let every good man pray to Thee when Thou mayest
be found; 7

for though the waterfloods be high,
they shall not come nigh him.

THOU art my hiding-place, Thou shalt preserve me from
trouble, 8

Thou shalt encompass me about with songs of deliverance.

[Jehovah speaketh].

“I will teach thee and shew thee the way wherein thou shouldest
go, 9

“and will guide thee with Mine eye.”

IV.

Exhortation to all not to withstand God.

Be not ye like to horse and mule, which have no understand-
ing! 10

his mouth must be held with bit and bridle,
who doth not approach Thee willingly.

Great plagues hath the ungodly,
but whoso putteth his trust in Jehovah mercy embraceth
him on every side. 11

Be glad, O ye righteous, rejoice in Jehovah, 12
be joyful all ye that are true of heart.

Ver. 6. *i.e.* Thou didst wash out the guilt of my sin.

§ 14. PSALM III.

¹ 2v. 6. THIS Psalm written in an hour of peril and persecution ¹
² 2v. 4. after the ark had been long established in Jerusalem ²,
plainly belongs to the time of Absalom's rebellion and pos-
³ 2v. 5. sibly was sung on the very morning ³ that followed the
king's flight from the city. It is marked by many of the
noblest features of David's character,—his sense of communion
⁴ 2v. 3—6. with God and calm confidence in His protection ⁴,—the
tender love which forbids him to mention his son's name
when it must be coupled with reproach,—and the royal
generosity which at the thought of the horrors of a civil
war merges every consideration of self in a prayer for the
⁵ 2v. 8. wellbeing of the people of God ⁵.

I.

The Psalmist's peril and despair.

Jehovah! how are they increased that trouble me! 1
many are they that rise up against me,
many there be that say of my soul, 2
“there is no help for him in God.”

II.

Former experience of the favour of God,

But Thou, Jehovah, art a shield about me, 3
Thou art my glory and the lifter up of my head!
I call upon Jehovah with my voice, 4
and He heareth me out of His holy hill.

III.

renewed in the past night-season.

I laid me down and slept, 5
 I am risen again, for Jehovah sustaineth me :
 I will not be afraid for ten thousands of the people, 6
 that have encamped against me round about.

IV.

Resignation to the will of God and prayer for the people.

Arise then, Jehovah ! help me, O my God ! 7
 Thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheekbone,
 Thou hast broken in pieces the teeth of the ungodly !
 To Jehovah belongeth the victory ! 8
 Thy blessing be upon Thy people !

Ver. 1. *they that trouble me, i.e.* the party in the state who instigated Absalom to rebellion.

Ver. 4. *I call*, expressing a habit [see § 15 iv. 3] in contrast with the special occasion indicated by the tense in verse 5.

§ 15. PSALM IV.

THIS even-song¹ belongs to the same time, possibly to ¹ v. 9. the same day, as the last Psalm : but was sung in an hour of still greater trial. The king had heard meanwhile of the calumnies which had followed his flight². Like all ² v. 2. true and heroic natures in the hour of peril and unjust persecution, he awakes to a consciousness of his strength and integrity.

The grandeur and royal dignity of David's character

was largely due to his deep sense of the covenant between God and His anointed³, and his constant endeavour to act worthily the part of God's vicegerent upon earth. His selection by Jehovah is to him an unanswerable reply to his calumniators, and the surest proof of his own uprightness⁴. This trait of David's character especially endeared him to his subjects, and was preserved in two distinct narratives, wherein his sense of the reverence due to the Anointed of Jehovah is shewn by his twice sparing the life of his persecutor Saul⁵. Thus it is that in the attacks upon himself all feeling for his own personal wrongs is lost in the sin and irreverence they imply towards Jehovah⁶. The absence of any prayer or wish for revenge becomes more striking when we consider the feelings of the age in which the Psalms were written⁷.

³ See particularly § 12 Ps. xviii. 19—30.

⁴ 2v. 3.

⁵ 1 Sam. xxiv. 6; xxvi. 11.

⁶ 2v. 4 and 5.

⁷ Ex. xxi. 24—27.
Matt. v. 38.
§ 70 Ps. xxxv. 26;
§ 73 Ps. lxix. 22—28.

I.

The Psalmist appealeth to God;

Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness; 1
Thou who hast set me at liberty when I was in trouble,
have mercy upon me, and hearken unto my prayer.

II.

reproacheth his slanderers and urgeth them to repentance;

O ye sons of men! how long will ye blaspheme mine honour? 2
How long will ye love vanity,
and seek lying?

Know then that Jehovah hath chosen the man that is true to
 Him, 3
 Jehovah heareth when I call upon Him!
 stand in awe and sin not! 4
 commune with your heart within your chamber and be still!
 offer the sacrifice that is due, 5
 and turn ye in trust to Jehovah!

III.

and prayeth for a ray of help to cheer his friends: for himself he trusteth in God.

There be many that say, "Oh! that we could see some good!" 6
 Lift up, O Jehovah! the light of Thy countenance upon us! 7
 Thou hast put gladness in my heart,
 greater than if my corn and wine increased. 8
 I lay me down in peace, and straightway rest! 9
 for Thou, Jehovah, alone
 wilt make me to dwell in safety!

Ver. 1. *my righteousness, i.e.* who upholdest my right and maintainest my righteousness.

Ver. 5. *offer the sacrifice that is due, i.e.* rightly due for the sin of blaspheming God and the king, in the hope that He will accept your sin-offering.

Ver. 6. *i.e.* many of my adherents in despair say "Would we could see some manifestation of divine favour!"

Ver. 8. Great interest was taken by the kings in the tillage of the land. At this time the "hunger, weariness and thirst" of his army in the desert naturally turned David's thoughts into this channel. See 2 Sam. xvii. 27—29.

§ 16. PSALM II.

¹ 1 Chron.
xxii. 9.
² 2 Sam. vii. 13.

“ I WILL be his father and he shall be My son¹,” or, as it is echoed in the Psalms of the Restoration, “ I have found David My servant ; with My holy oil have I anointed him ; he shall cry unto Me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. And I will make him My firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth². ”

² § 124 Ps.
lxxxix. 20,
26, 27.

Such was the great promise delivered by Nathan to David ; it expresses the vital principle of the Hebrew monarchy. It is strange to watch the change which has taken place in the life-time of a single generation. Samuel had shuddered at the danger of the Theocracy, when the throne of Jehovah was assigned to a human usurper ; but the greatness of David's spirit transfigured the whole idea of Monarchy. Saul had paid little attention to the fact that he was a Captain of the inheritance of Jehovah, whereas the main-spring of David's actions was the sense of his relation to God. David may thus be said to have created the essential idea of the Israelite polity, that the King was only a regent in God's name, the deputy of Jehovah, and the chosen instrument of His will. So far from holding his office as an usurper he looked upon himself as the constituted witness of the dominion of Jehovah ; and because he recognized the law, not of his own pleasure but of God, as the rule of his kingdom, he became closely associated with Nathan³, the great prophet of his age, and received from him the promise of the

³ Cp. § 10 Ps.
cx. 4, note.

blessing which should rest first on Solomon, and through him on all true kings of Israel.

It is pathetic to see that the next important interference of the prophetic order after Nathan had secured the throne to Solomon, was the symbolic action of the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite, which was fraught with such momentous consequences to the future history of the Monarchy when he "rent the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and gave ten tribes to Jeroboam⁴." A comparison of the utterances⁴ of Nathan which were embodied in this Psalm with the words of Ahijah affords a striking instance of the true moral basis of the promises of the Old Testament. If we possessed the biography of Solomon by Nathan⁵ we might have a touching record of the prophet pleading with the apostate king, and recalling his former promises in words like those in which a later psalmist appeals to the rulers of his time, "I have said, Ye are gods*, and ye are all children of the most Highest, but ye shall die like men, and fall all the sort of you, ye princes⁶." Though the 'king of peace'⁷ failed to bring true peace and prosperity⁸ to the

⁴ 1 Kings xi. 31.

⁵ 2 Chron. ix. 29.

⁶ § 83 Ps. lxxxii. 6, 7.

⁷ 1 Chron. xxii. 9. Shelomoh or Solomo.

⁸ § 98 Ps. cxxii. 7, &c.

* So the term 'gods' is applied to 'judges' (Ex. xxi. 6): and bringing a case to trial before a judge is called 'enquiring of God' (Exod. xviii. 15). Cp. also (ib. ver. 19), 'Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God'—implying a reservation of the more important causes for the decision of the direct representative of God. (Cp. *Bibl. Dict.* 'Judges.') Perhaps too Judges v. 8 may be thus explained. Cp. § 53 Ps. lviii, and introduction.

nation, yet the idea which lay at the root of the promise lived on in the hearts of the prophets and was the stay that supported them in the darkest hours of the Captivity and the text of the most sublime appeals for a national reformation.

This Psalm then, being based as it is on the words of Nathan, must be historically referred to the time of the coronation of Solomon. It seems to breathe the calmness of conscious power when menaced by an impending revolution; and on this ground will best suit the perilous times which ensued on David's death. His chosen heir had hardly freed himself from the troubles of a disputed succession before he found the Empire itself menaced by disruption. The subject nations had at times moved uneasily under the law imposed upon them even in David's time: but now there seemed threatenings of a general upheaving. The Edomites and Syrians soon broke out into open rebellion; and it seems not improbable that the other heathen tribes had long cherished a hope that the glory of the Empire would depart with David, and had meditated a general insurrection while the power was not yet firmly grasped by the youthful hands of Solomon. But the king is still inspired with David's spirit, and though he cannot refer, like David, to a long series of deliverances⁹ as the ground of his trust in Jehovah, yet he can appeal to the solemn promise of God's fatherly help¹⁰ which was given him at his great inauguration. With the words of the prophet still ringing in his ears, he has no thought of his own personal aggrandisement, but aims only

⁹ § 12 Ps.
xviii. &c.

¹⁰ *Ps.* 6, 7

at reasserting God's supremacy over the heathen, whose real aim he knows is to set themselves free from the restraints imposed upon them by the law and religion of Jehovah, and to return once more to the unbridled licence of their barbarous rites. Such counsels he feels must share the inevitable fate of all human fighting against God, and with the kindly feeling of a benevolent king¹¹ he solemnly counsels them to^{11 77. 10, 11, 12.} bow down ere it is too late at the altar of the God whom they have incensed*.

* For an exposition of the historical meaning of this Psalm, cp. Arnold's Sermons on *Interpretation of Scripture*, p. 435.

I.

The Psalmist expresseth his wonder at the conspiracy.

Why do the nations gather themselves together,	1
and why do the peoples imagine a vain thing?	
the kings of the earth stand up	2
and the rulers take counsel together	
against Jehovah and against His anointed:	

The vain boast of the revolted nation.

"let us break their bonds asunder,	3
"and cast away their cords from us!"	

II.

God heareth

He that hath His throne in Heaven shall laugh them to scorn,	4
the Lord shall have them in derision;	
then shall He speak unto them in His wrath,	5
and terrify them in His sore displeasure:	

and replieth.

“and yet it is I who have anointed My king, 6
upon My holy hill of Sion.”

III.

The King remindeth them of the divine utterance at his coronation,

Let me tell of the covenant ; 7
Jehovah said unto me : “thou art My son,
this day have I begotten thee!
desire of Me and I shall give thee the nations for thine inhe-
ritance, 8
and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession ;
thou shalt bruise them with a rod of iron, 9
and break them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

IV.

and adviseth submission.

Be wise now therefore, O ye kings, 10
be warned, ye that are judges of the earth,
serve Jehovah with reverence, 11
and quake before Him with trembling !
take warning, lest He be angry and ye perish ; 12
for His wrath is quickly kindled :
blessed be all they that put their trust in Him.

Ver. 3. Spoken by the heathen.

Ver. 5. *Then shall he etc.* *Now*, while they are plotting, Jehovah looketh down in quiet scorn on them, but *then*, that is, if they attempt to carry their intentions out into act, He will overwhelm them with His chastisement.

Ver. 6. ‘I’ is emphatic : *you* dare to begin a vain war, but *I* have anointed

my king over you, and shall support him against you. In the rapid wrathful speech, the first part of the contrast is omitted, as being sufficiently implied by the second.

Vv. 7—9. 3rd strophe. The recollection of the solemn ceremony of the Anointing leads the poet on to the further description of the prophetic address, which was made to him at the time.

Ver. 7. *this day have I begotten thee.* If every man can spiritually become a new man, much more should a king become born again, at the sacred moment of his election, when all outward power is transferred to him. Then, if he is to be a king indeed, he must realize in his heart the true meaning of his kingship: the conditions of his rule were that he was to act as the vicegerent of Jehovah. This is the covenant, the statute mutually ratified by king and people, proclaimed no doubt solemnly at the coronation of Solomon as it had been at that of Saul (1 Sam. x. 25) and of David (2 Sam. v. 3), when the elders of Israel reminded him of the word of the Lord, "Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel," and "King David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel."

Ver. 12. *take warning,* so the LXX.

Another version is, "Kiss the Son," that is, "do homage to the king as the Lord's anointed," which would suit well with ver. 2, "take counsel against the Lord, and against his anointed," but this besides being questionable as a translation would interfere with the connexion of the last strophe in which nothing is said of the king; in fact, the mention of the homage to the lower and earthly kingship would be an anticlimax, as the Psalm is continually mounting from the lower to the higher, and the earthly attributes of the king are lost sight of in the sublime thought of the real identity of his rule with that of Jehovah.

Note. Cp. § 37 Ps. lxxvi. and § 63 Ps. lxxii, notes on expectation of a Messiah. ♣

§ 17. PSALM CXLIV. 12—15.

¹ Cp. § 24
Ps. xxvii.
and § 11 Ps.
lx. and notes.
² 22. 1—11
§ 142.

THIS fragment forms the second part of a Composite¹ Psalm, of which the former part² belongs to the latest period. The simple and forcible description of a time of peace and prosperity, the picture of a people living in the happy contentment of pastoral life, under a religion calculated, in wonderful contrast with that of other nations, to further the highest interests of man, can hardly apply so well to any other time of their history as to the end of David's, or the beginning of Solomon's reign. The mention of the sculptured pillars supporting, like Caryatides, the inner roof of a palace, to indicate the stately beauty of their daughters, and of the nurseries of young trees, to indicate that of their sons,—point to a time, when architecture was much thought of and the great works of Solomon were familiar to the people.

The sudden change in the fourth verse of this fragment suggests the thought, that the preceding description may have been quoted, after the manner of the Composite Psalms, in a state of things widely different. The exclamation in v. 15 seems rather to express the longing hope that such prosperity may be their portion, than the triumphant thanksgiving of men in the actual enjoyment of it. This feeling of longing after the prosperity of David's reign and the protection of Jehovah which it implied, is one of the most striking features of the Psalms of the period of the Return from Captivity.

Our sons are as plants, that shoot up in their youth, 12
 our daughters are as pillars, yea as polished columns of a
 palace,
 our garners are full and plenteous with all manner of store, 13
 our sheep bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our
 fields,
 our oxen are big with young, and no untimely birth, 14
 no going forth to war, and no complaining in our streets;—
 happy are the people that are in such a case; 15
 yea, blessed are the people, who have Jehovah for their God!

Ver. 15. Cp. Amos v. 3, alluding to the hardships of conscription.

§§ 18—20.

THE DAVIDIC PSALMS FROM THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL.

AT the close of the Davidic period are inscribed three
 1 Psalms of David, not contained in the Psalter, but ^{1 From}
 bringing out in a remarkable degree the great features of his ^{2 Sam.}
 character, his justice, his intense and tender love, and ^{i. 19—27.}
 that exalted grandeur, which made him at once the man ^{iii. 33, 34.}
 after God's own heart and the realisation to his people of ^{xxiii. 1—7.}
 their brightest hopes.

§ 18. 2 SAM. I. 19—27.

DAVID'S LAMENT OVER SAUL AND JONATHAN.

IN the great battle of mount Gilboa Saul and Jonathan
 perished. The dark fierce jealousy of Saul was now for-

gotten ; and David's passionate love for Jonathan is expressed in this wild and tender outburst of grief. It is Saul of the early days whom he speaks of here ; Saul the mighty warrior, the anointed of Jehovah, the delight of his people, the father of his tenderly loved and faithful friend : and Jonathan, the greatest archer of the great archer tribe, the hero of the battle of Michmash, who with his own hand had dislodged the Philistine garrison from their stronghold and inflicted a defeat from which they only began to recover towards the end

¹ 1 Sam. xiv.

² 2 Sam. i, 18.

of Saul's reign¹. David introduced the song² of the bow among the men of this tribe as a tribute to the memory of his fallen friend ; and so this elegy has been preserved to us, handed down from generation to generation by the bowmen of Judah, to be enshrined for ever in the hearts of all men, as the monument of a pure and faithful friendship.

I.

The beauty of the forest, O Israel, is slain upon thy heights: 19
how are the mighty fallen!

Tell it not in Gath, 20
 publish it not in the streets of Askalon,
 lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
 lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph!

Ye mountains of Gilboa, let no dew nor rain come upon you
 and your fields of offerings, 21
 for there the shield of the mighty is stained,
 the bow of Saul, not anointed with oil!

From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty 22
 the bow of Jonathan turned not back
 and the sword of Saul returned not empty.

Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, 23
 and in their death they were not divided,
 they were swifter than eagles, and stronger than lions:
 ye daughters of Israel, weep for Saul, 24
 who clothed you in scarlet, with delights,
 who put ornaments of gold on your apparel!

II.

How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle, 25
 Jonathan slain upon thy heights!
 I am distressed for thee, Jonathan! my brother! 26
 very pleasant hast thou been to me,
 thy love to me was wonderful, yea, passing the love of
 women.

III.

How are the mighty fallen, 27
 and the weapons of war perished!

Ver. 19. *The beauty of the forest*, i. e. the larger kind of gazelle, the name by which Jonathan was known among his comrades.

Ver. 21. *fields of offerings*, i. e. your fertile slopes, so productive in offerings. *not anointed*, i. e. the holy oil rubbed off in the mire. *not*=no longer.

Ver. 22. *the mighty*, i. e. the huge giants of Philistia.

Ver. 24. *daughters*, waiting the arrival of the king laden with spoils for them. Cp. 1 Sam. xviii. 6 and Judges v. 30.

Ver. 27. *the mighty*, i. e. those by whom the war was waged.

§ 19. 2 SAM. III. 33, 34.

DAVID'S LAMENT OVER ABNER.

¹ Cp. § 2 Ps.
vii. & § 15
Ps. iv.
Introduc-
tions.

THE noblest side of David's character shews itself in his conduct and feelings towards Saul and the upholders of Saul's dynasty¹. Abner had come to David to Hebron, with 20 chief men of the tribe of Benjamin, to offer him the sovereignty over their tribe and the tribes which had been united with it. He was honourably received and sent away in peace, but Joab, the nephew of David and captain of the host, who was just returning from the pursuit of the enemy, sent messengers after him as though wishing to say something on behalf of the king. He returned, and was treacherously slain by Joab and his brother Abishai, in revenge for the death of their brother Asahel². He was buried in Hebron; king David followed the bier, and lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner;

² 2 Sam.
ii. 23.

Should Abner die as a malefactor dieth? 33
Thy hands were not bound,
nor thy feet put in fetters; 34
as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou!

thus bearing witness before assembled Israel that Abner's death had not been, as Joab would have made it appear, the well merited punishment of a villain, but the treacherous murder of an honourable man.

§ 20. 2 SAM. XXIII. 1—7.

THE LAST WORDS OF DAVID.

DAVID was now near his death. He had already charged Solomon¹ with his last wishes to keep the ^{1 1 Kings ii. 1—11.} covenant with Jehovah, on which his kingship depended.

He had assembled the princes of Israel²; the captains, the ^{2 1 Chron. xxviii. 1—10; xxix. 22.} officers and the valiant men, that he might in their presence solemnly charge the new king to complete the Temple, for which he had been allowed to prepare. And now once again he touches his lyre to sum up all the experience of his life in one last word of high prophetic import, true not only for that but for all time. It is the very voice of Jehovah³, ^{3 v. 2.} breathed into the heart of His servant, and by him uttered for the guidance not only of his son but of all mankind. It is as though the various notes of former Psalms were here gathered up in one grand chord uniting and blending them all in full and perfect harmony.

So saith David, the son of Jesse,	1
so saith the man who was raised on high,	
the anointed of the God of Jacob	
and the sweet Psalmist of Israel:	
the spirit of Jehovah speaketh in me,	2
and His words are on my tongue;	
the God of Israel hath said,	3
the Rock of Israel hath spoken to me;	

I.

If a man ruleth over men justly, ruling in the fear of God,
it is as when a morning is bright and the sun riseth, 4
a morning and no clouds;
after sunshine, after rain the tender grass springeth from the
earth.

II.

For is not my house so with God that He made with me an
everlasting covenant, 5
ordered in all things and sure?
for all my salvation and all my desire—
yea, should He not make it to grow?

III.

But wicked men are all of them as abominable thorns, 6
that cannot be grasped with the hand:
and whoso cometh near them is fenced with iron and the staff
of spears; 7
and they are forthwith utterly burnt with fire.

Ver. 5. The covenant between Jehovah and the king, His vicegerent on earth, like all contracts, requires witnesses to its truth and guarantees for its observance. The true prophets are the guarantees and the witnesses, and their words are the evidence upon which this covenant rests. Compare 2 Sam. vii. and § 10 Ps. cx.

PERIOD II.

*PSALMS OF THE MONARCHY FROM
DAVID TO THE CAPTIVITY.*

PERIOD II.

FROM DAVID TO THE CAPTIVITY.

WHEN we pass from the age of David, we pass from growth to decadence, from organization to disruption, from the enthusiasm of a golden age of spiritual elevation to a time of cold materialism or debasing superstition. The whole period from David to Hezekiah is one of degeneracy and decay. Notwithstanding some attempts at reformation, it is probable that the mass of the southern tribes deserted the Temple for the more attractive worship of the High Places. But if there were few who paid due honour to Jehovah in his material Temple, there were fewer still who were enabled to attain to purity of heart and devotion of spirit, sufficient to make their feelings worthy of being recorded in that spiritual Temple, that shrine framed of the noblest utterances of the Hebrew religion of which David had laid the foundation-stone, and destined to attract the devotion of the world for ages after the religious ceremonies and the Temples of his successors had passed away. There can indeed be no stronger proof of the decay of the religious and national life during this time, than the lack of any outburst of

spiritual song such as marked almost every important epoch of the Jewish history. The first indication of such a national revival is to be found in the group of Psalms which celebrate the triumph of Israel at the dispersion of the host of Sennacherib¹.

Of all the Psalms which have been referred with any probability to this period, two at least², though not perhaps bearing so markedly the impress of David's time as those which have been assigned to him above, yet seem to be, if not actually his, at least close imitations of his style and thoughts. The remainder, with two³ remarkable exceptions, are either personal thanksgivings⁴ or elegies⁵, which scarcely admit of being historically assigned to any period except on the less palpable grounds of the antiquity of their language.

¹ §§ 35—39 Pss. xlv. xlviii. lxxvi. lxxv. lxx.

² §§ 24, 25 Pss. xxvii. xxiii. Cp. also § 21 Ps. xx.

³ §§ 22, 23 Pss. xxi. xlv. Ewald suggests the possibility that these may have emanated from the northern kingdom, and have been memorials of the brighter interval "when Jeroboam the son of Joash restored the coast of Israel according to the word of the Lord God of Israel which he spake by the hand of his servant Josiah" (2 Kings xiv. 25—28).

⁴ §§ 28—30 Pss. xxx. xli. lxi. (12—18). The thanksgiving contained in Jonah, cap. ii. should also be classed with this series.

⁵ § 26 Ps. vi. § 27 Ps. xiii. § 31 Ps. xii. § 32 Ps. lxii. § 33 Ps. xxxix. § 34 Ps. xc.

PERIOD II.

FROM DAVID TO THE CAPTIVITY.

[SECTIONS 21—63.]

§ 21. PSALM XX.

IN this Psalm we have a relic of the ancient Liturgy, an antiphonal¹ Temple hymn, of which the strophes are sung alternately by the assembled congregation and the priest, while the king is offering sacrifice before the day of an unequal struggle against the cavalry and chariots of the Heathen².

¹ Cp. §§ 3, 4
Ps. xxiv.
§ 22 Ps. xxi.
etc. Judg. v.
2, 12 etc.

² v. 7.

The importance attached by the religious feelings of the Hebrews to the preliminary offerings before battle appears from the scene at Gilgal, when the king risked the displeasure of the prophet sooner than enter on the battle without the usual prayers and sacrifice³.

³ 1 Sam. xiii.
12. Cp. v. 3.

This Psalm breathes throughout the same spirit of faith that "there is no restraint with the Lord to save by many or by few," in which Jonathan and his armourbearer⁴ tri-

⁴ 1 Sam. xiv.
14.

umphed unaided over a host of foes, and the thousands of
chariots and horsemen in which the Philistines trusted

⁵ Cp. ib. xiii. melted away in trembling at the power of Jehovah⁵.

⁵ : xiv. 15 (it
was a trem-
bling of God)
with *zv.* 1, 5,
7.

The People

pray for the success of their king in battle and feel assured of the victory.

May Jehovah hear thee in the day of trouble;	1
the name of the God of Jacob defend thee!	
send thee help from the sanctuary,	2
and strengthen thee out of Sion;	
remember all thy offerings,	3
and accept thy burnt sacrifice;	
grant thee thy heart's desire	4
and fulfil all thy mind!	
Let us rejoice in thy prosperity,	5
and set up the name of our God on high;	
Jehovah will perform all thy petitions.	

The Priest

confirmeth their hopes and exhorteth them to trust in God.

Now know I that Jehovah helpeth His anointed,	6
and will hear him from His holy heaven,	
even with the saving help of His right hand!	
Some put their trust in chariots and some in horses,	7
but our trust is in the name of Jehovah our God:	
they are bowed down and fallen,	8
but we are risen and stand upright.	

The People.

O Jehovah, save the king!

9

O may He hear us when we cry.

Ver. 2. *send thee help from the sanctuary*, probably in allusion to the presence of the ark or rather of the ephod in battle. Once the ark was moveable (1 Sam. iv. 4), now the help is to come 'out of the sanctuary of Sion.' Cp. Stanley, *Jewish Church*, II. p. 215.

Ver. 5. *thy prosperity*, they see that the sacrifice of ver. 3 is accepted, and at once change their prayer into a thanksgiving for the victory which they feel is certain.

set up, as an ensign. So A.V. "in the name of our God we will set up our banners."

Ver. 6. *Now*, because the people are so full of trust in Jehovah, and because the sacrifices have been favourably received.

The change from the plural to the singular marks the division between the words of the priest and those of the people.

Ver. 7. *in chariots*, as the Canaanites, Judg. i. 19; iv. 3, 13; Josh. xvii. 16; and occasionally as the Israelites, 1 Kings x. 26, 29; Is. ii. 7.

Ver. 9. *O may He hear us*. The change from the second to the third person is characteristic of the Hebrew manner of conquering emotion, and sinking into calmer language at the close of the poem.

§ 22. PSALM XXI.

FROM the reign of Solomon onward the people, dazzled by the halo of glory which had been thrown over the monarchy, were ever more and more tempted to forget the Theocracy which underlay it. But the Prophets still remained as witnesses of the original covenant of the kingship, and their constant endeavour was to save the people from being degraded into a mere abject submission to an earthly ruler by leading them to remember on every occasion that in honouring the king they were honouring the Vicegerent of Jehovah, and that it was for this only that they paid him reverence. Thus the Prophet feels it a part of his duty to hallow the natural feelings of loyalty, and to give a religious tone to their joy at the long-continued¹ preservation of the pride and blessing² of their nation.

The occasion of the Psalm seems to be a celebration of some solemn anniversary, such as the birthday³ or accession⁴ of the king. In many points it resembles the last Psalm, and may not improbably have been modelled upon it. It has the same antiphonal form, and seems to be adapted in the same way for Liturgical use. Both are hymns of battle, and there are also many special resemblances in the parts assigned to the Priest and to the People⁵. But the tone is different. This is less devotional; it speaks less of God than of the king. It is also more exultant: the one is like a litany; the other a psæm⁶.

¹ 7. 4.² 7. 6.

³ Gen. xl. 20;
Job i. 4;
Jer. xx. 15;
Matt. xiv. 6.
⁴ Hos. vii. 5.

⁵ 22. 7, 8, 13.
xx. 5, 6, 9.

⁶ 22. 1—6;
xx. 1—4.

The one tells of the eve of an army's actual departure for the scene of war; it reflects the anxious earnest thoughts of those who feel what they have at stake in the contest⁷: ⁷ xx. 1, 2, 3. the other breathes the joyous confidence of the nation and their scorn for the threats of the foe⁸, when in the peaceful ⁸ xv. 8—12. quiet of their homes they⁹ can still hope that the terror ⁹ vi. 7. of their first appearance¹⁰ will drive the foe from the field¹¹, ¹⁰ vii. 9. ¹¹ vi. 12. and that when they march forth it will be rather as ministers of offended justice¹² than as combatants in a hard ¹² xv. 9, 10. fought field.

The People.

The king rejoiceth in Thy strength, O Jehovah,	1
exceeding glad is he of Thy salvation :	
Thou hast given him his heart's desire,	2
and hast not denied him the request of his lips ;	
yea, Thou forestallest him with choicest blessings,	3
Thou settest a crown of gold upon his head ;	
he asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest it him,	4
length of days—even for ever and ever.	
Great is his power, through Thy saving help,	5
glory and majesty dost Thou lay upon him :	
yea, Thou shalt make him a blessing for ever,	6
and glad before Thee with delight :	
because the king putteth his trust in Jehovah	7
through the mercy of the most Highest he shall not miscarry.	

*The Priest**addresseseth the king.*

All thine enemies shall feel thy hand! 8
thy right hand shall find out them that hate thee;
thou shalt make them like a fiery oven when thou appearest;— 9
Jehovah shall destroy them in His wrath and the fire
shall consume them;—
their fruit shalt thou root out of the earth, 10
and their seed from among the children of men.

Though they intend mischief against thee, 11
and imagine evil—yet shall they not prevail:
for thou shalt put them to flight 12
when thou makest thy bow ready against the face of them.

The People.

Arise, Jehovah, in thy strength! 13
O let us sing and praise thy power!

Ver. 6. *Yea, thou shalt make him a blessing for ever.* Cp. Gen. xii. 2, "and thou shalt be a blessing."

Ver. 8. As in Psalm xx., so here it is probable that the first part is a hymn sung during the sacrifice and that the second part represents the priest's blessing at its favourable acceptance.

Ver. 9. *fiery oven*, as Sodom. Gen. xix. 28.

§ 23. PSALM XLV.

A ROYAL MARRIAGE PSALM*.

THE special occasion which this Psalm seems to celebrate is the entrance of the bridal procession into the palace of the royal Bridegroom¹. True to the ¹ *20. 10-17.* religious feeling of Hebrew poetry which throws a spiritual light over all that causes human joy or woe, the psalmist cannot look on the king's justice in the judgment seat², his ² *20. 7, 8.* prowess in the battle³, or even on his personal beauty⁴ and ³ *20. 4-6.* the happiness of the present hour⁵ but as blessings sent from ⁴ *20. 3.* God and as proofs of the king's union with the Divine Ruler ⁵ *20. 14.* of the world.

I.

The Psalmist celebrateth the king's beauty and gracious presence as proofs of God's favour;

My heart is overflowing with a glorious word; 1
 I speak, and my song is touching the king:
 be my tongue the pen of a ready writer! 2

Thou art fairer than the children of men:
 grace is shed over thy lips; 3
 therefore doth God bless thee for ever!

II.

and promiseth him success as a warrior because of his justice.

Gird thee upon thy thigh thy sword of might, 4
 thy glory and thy majesty!

* Or "A song of loves," as the Bible-superscription has it.

and in thy majesty ride on 5
in the name of truth and meekness and of right,
that thy right hand may teach thee wondrous things!
thine arrows are very sharp so that nations fall before thee; 6
they pierce even to the heart of the king's enemies!
thy throne is God's throne and endureth for ever, 7
a sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom;
thou lovest right, and hatest wrong: 8
therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee
with the oil of gladness above thy fellows!

III.

All thy garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia; 9
out of ivory palaces the harp-strings make thee glad!
kings' daughters are among thy honourable women, 10
upon thy right hand doth stand the queen,
in gold of Ophir!

[*The Queen approacheth.*]

Hearken, O daughter, consider, and incline thine ear, 11
forget all thine own people, and thy father's house;
and let the king have pleasure in thy beauty, 12
for he is thy lord, and worship thou him:
and the daughter of Tyre shall wait on thee with a gift, 13
yea, and the rich ones of the earth!

[*The Queen entereth.*]

All glorious cometh the daughter of the king, 14
her clothing is of wrought gold:

in raiment of needlework is she led unto the king, 15
 virgins that be her fellows, bear her company,
 and are brought to thee!
 with joy and gladness are they brought, 16
 and enter into the king's palace.
 Instead of thy fathers thou shalt have children; 17
 whom thou mayest make princes in all the land.
 I will tell of thy name from one generation to another! 18
therefore shall the people give praise unto thee
world without end!

Ver. 3. *therefore*. The recurrence of this word marks the burden or chorus of the Psalm: from the outward graces I conclude that the blessing of God is on thee.

Ver. 4. There may have been a special ceremony like the binding the sword and spur on a knight at his creation. *glory and majesty*, *i.e.* deck thyself in thy royal arms for war.

Ver. 5. *and in thy majesty*. The psalmist is still dwelling on the splendour of the king's armour. *in the name of truth*. Cp. the knight's oath—to keep faith, protect the distressed, and maintain right against might. The king is to have no thought of danger, he is to trust in God who will strengthen his right hand, so that nations will quail before him, while the leaders fall under his arrows.

Ver. 10. *thy honourable women*, or 'loved ones.' The poet pictures the new queen as already there at his right hand, *i.e.* exalted above all in the palace. Cp. Esther ii. 9, 17.

Ver. 13. *the daughter of Tyre*, *i.e.* the Tyrians, 'the rich' of the next line: they are specially mentioned both on account of their wealth, and also their nearness to the Israelites. The Psalm is referred by many to the northern kingdom, in which case the allusion to Tyre would be specially applicable.

Ver. 14. *cometh*, *i.e.* within the palace.

Ver. 17. The future glories of his race shall be greater than the past.

Ver. 18. *therefore* depends on ver. 17.

world without end, the repetition of *for ever and ever* is one of the characteristics of the Psalm, cp. vv. 3, 7, and for the meaning cp. § 10 Ps. cx. 4, note.

§ 24. PSALM XXVII.

THIS seems to be one of the Composite Psalms*.

¹ *ver.* 1—7.

² *ver.* 3.

³ *ver.* 4.

⁴ *ver.* 6.

The first part contains the triumph of a warrior's faith¹ amidst the perils of war²: in his trouble he only regrets his protracted absence from the sanctuary³, and longs passionately for the time when he may once more have access to it, and may offer there the thank-offering⁴ for the victory of which he is already assured. The fourth verse in its present form must have been written after the Temple was built; and on this ground the Psalm is here placed in the second period; but the spirit as well as the imagery of the whole of this part is Davidic.

⁵ *ver.* 8—14.

The second part⁵ seems to be the prayer of a homeless exile, a prophet or a priest rather than a warrior, who is endangered not by an enemy from without, but by the persecutions of his own citizens⁶. The whole spirit of this part

⁶ *Cp.* 3 with *ver.* 12, 13, 14.

* See note on § 11 Ps. lx. So the conclusion of § 72 Ps. xl. 16—21 is used as an independent Psalm (Ps. lxx.). The whole of § 143 Ps. cviii is formed by a selection of the most beautiful parts of Ps. lvii. and lx. In a similar way § 84 Ps. liii. is merely a repetition of Ps. xiv. In the Psalm which occurs in 1 Chron. xvi. 8—36, are combined the whole of § 109 Ps. xcvi. and parts of §§ 144, 133 Ps. cv. 1—15, cvi. (vv. 1, 45, 46). It appears from this that portions of the Psalms were redistributed according to ideas which were formed of their natural fitness.

In the same manner a compiler may have prefixed the first part of §§ 3, 4 Ps. xxiv. (*ver.* 1—6) to the second part (*ver.* 7—10) as forming a suitable introduction to it; and similarly the two parts of § 8 Ps. xix. may have been combined with a view of adding the praise of God for His law to the original Psalm of praise of Him for His works in nature. See also §§ 116, 30 Ps. lxi.

of the Psalm is less confident and hopeful; there are notes of deeper pathos, almost of despair, in it, which are quite remote from the feeling of the first part⁷. It seems to breathe rather the spirit of Jeremiah than that of David, and may not improbably express the sorrows of some of the sufferers from the religious persecutions at the close of the monarchy.

The abruptness of the transition from ver. 14 to ver. 15 will be explained if the last two verses are attached to the 1st part of the Psalm⁸, to which indeed they seem to form ^a v. 7. a natural sequel.

I.

Trust in God maketh the Psalmist fearless in peril;

Jehovah is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? 1

Jehovah is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I
be afraid?

When the wicked—even mine oppressors and my foes— 2
came upon me to eat up my flesh,
they stumbled and fell!

though an host of men be laid against me, yet is not my
heart afraid; 3
though there rise up war against me, yet have I trust withal.

II.

he yearneth for the protection of God's house, which he hopeth soon to revisit in triumph.

One thing have I desired of Jehovah—this do I long for; 4
even to dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of my
life,
to behold the fair beauty of Jehovah, and to joy in His
temple!

for in the time of trouble He doth hide me in His tabernacle! 5
yea He sheltereth me in the shelter of His tent and setteth
me on a rock of stone!
and now shall He lift up mine head above mine enemies round
about me, 6
that I may offer offerings of joy in His tabernacle and
sing and speak praises to Jehovah! 7

I.

A plaintive cry to God to abide with the Psalmist in his need,

Hearken unto my voice, O Jehovah, when I cry, 8
have mercy upon me and hear me:
my heart hath mused upon Thy word; "seek ye My face!" 9
Thy face, Jehovah, do I seek!
O hide not Thou Thy face from me, 10
nor cast Thy servant away in displeasure!
Thou hast been my succour; put me not away, 11
neither forsake me, O God of my salvation!
When my father and my mother forsake me, 12
Jehovah taketh me up.

II.

and save him from the snares of his persecutors.

Teach me Thy way, O Jehovah, 13
and lead me in a plain path,
because of them that lie in wait for me!
deliver me not over unto the will of mine adversaries, 14
for there are false witnesses risen up against me and such
as breathe out cruelty.

III.

God the only safety in peril.

Oh—if I had not believed verily to see the goodness of
 Jehovah 15
 in the land of the living!—
 Wait on Jehovah, be strong, and let thine heart take courage, 16
 yea, wait on Jehovah!

Ver. 1. Cp. § 117 Ps. xci. for the full expression of the same idea.

Ver. 5. The same metaphor of the sheltering tent is used Is. iv. 6, "There shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day time from the heat, and for a place of refuge and for a covert from storm and rain." Is. xxv. 4, "Thou hast been a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall." Cp. § 57 Ps. xxxi. 22, etc.

For the *rock* as a tower of strength against foes cp. § 12 Ps. xviii. 33 (note), and Proverbs xviii. 10: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe;" while, as Leighton says, "they who know not this refuge, when any danger arises fly and flutter they know not whither."

As a symbol of a sure foothold, cp. § 72 Ps. xl. 2, "He brought me also out of the horrible pit, out of the mire and clay, and set my feet upon the rock."

Ver. 9. *Thy word*, i. e. 'Seek ye my face.'

Ver. 13. *a plain path*, i. e. free from the dangers of ambuscade. Cp. Jer. xxxi. 9, "I will cause them to walk in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble." § 57 Ps. xxxi. 5, "Draw me out of the net that they have laid privily for me."

Ver. 15. *Oh...if I had not*. The A. V. supplies the omitted clause by 'I had fainted.' For similar expressions, cp. Luke xix. 42, 2 Sam. v. 8. 'Who-soever smiteth the Jebusites—!' where the A. V. supplies 'he shall be chief and captain.'

§ 25. PSALM XXIII.

¹ v. 6.² § 24 v. 4.

THE mention of 'God's house' in this¹, as well as in the 27th Psalm², requires that both alike, at least in their present shape, should be assigned to a period subsequent to the building of the Temple; but an almost universal feeling has connected this Psalm with the name of the shepherd-king of Israel.

Some have seen in it a thanksgiving for some signal deliverance from the danger of famine, and have even sought the special occasion in David's joy at the loyal help of Barzillai and his friends at Mahanaim, when he was 'weary and weakhanded' in his flight from Absalom, and his 'people were hungry and thirsty in the wilderness'.³

³ 2 Sam. xvii. 2.

But such an allusion can only be looked upon as illustrating one side of the subject, and not as exhausting the full meaning of the Psalm.

Whatever may have been the occasion of this Psalm, there is no recorded life with which we can associate it but the early life of the royal shepherd on the lonely hill-sides of Judah, when, in the awful presence of Nature⁴,

⁴ v. 4: cp. § 7 Ps. xxix.⁵ v. 4.

he was 'learning the secret of invisible strength',⁵ and there was 'growing in him a scorn of the strength which lies in bulk, and looks terrible to the eye'⁶—with the persecuted fugitive maintaining his independence against the selfish malice of a tyrant—with the king, whose name lived on

⁶ v. 5: cp. 1 Sam. xvii. 36.

in the hearts of his people⁷, as the one prince who had governed them as the Vicegerent of Jehovah, who had looked upon his kingdom, 'not as a prize which he had won, but as a trust committed to him, a trust which he could only administer while he remembered that the Lord was his shepherd and that he was the shepherd of every Israelite, and every man in the earth⁸.'

⁷ Ps. lxxviii.
72; cp. Is. xl.
11.
⁸ Mauri :o,
Prophets and
Kings, pp.
40—53.

Should it appear to any that the indescribable tenderness expressed in this Psalm ought to be looked for from some gentler and more leaning spirit than that of David, it must still be remembered that the last and highest perfection which the strong nature and indomitable will can reach is that of unselfish devotion and confiding repose in the protecting love of God, in which, as David had learned from the experience of a long life, lay the secret of true strength.

But it is no ordinary belief in God's protection which finds expression here; it is the tenderness of a warm and sympathetic heart, which amid the mysterious influences of nature has realized the loving care of God by carrying out His purposes in caring for His creatures.

I.

The loving care of God.

Jehovah is my shepherd; therefore can I lack nothing:	1
He maketh me to lie down in a green pasture,	2
and leadeth me beside the waters of comfort;	

He refresheth my soul,
 and bringeth me forth in the paths of righteousness 3
 for His name's sake.

II.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
 I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; 4
 Thy rod and thy staff—*they* comfort me.
 Thou preparest a table for me in the face of mine enemies; 5
 Thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup is full.
 Thy lovingkindness and mercy shall follow me all the days of
 my life, 6
 and I will dwell in the house of Jehovah for ever.

Ver. 2. *waters of comfort*, i. e. refreshing and restoring water.

Ver. 3. *paths of righteousness* or blessedness—the fruit of righteousness, cp. § 4 Ps. xxiv. 5, note. For the intimate connexion of righteousness and happiness, cp. Balaam's prayer, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his" (Numb. xxiii. 10).

for His name's sake, that His name may be glorified for this proof of His faithfulness towards His servants.

Ver. 4. *valley of shadow of death*, or 'of trouble,' i. e. 'a valley dark and gloomy as death.' For the dread with which the Hebrews regarded desolate scenery, cp. Hos. ii. 14, 15; Isai. lxxv. 10, the name 'Achor' or valley of trouble.

Ver. 5. God is spoken of as the host who entertains the suppliant in defiance of his pursuers, and makes him the favoured guest and constant inmate of His house.

anointed with oil, as the preparation for a feast. Cp. § 41 Ps. cxli. 6, note; § 132 Ps. civ. 15; Luke vii. 46.

§§ 26, 27. * PSALMS VI, XIII.

THE development of the monarchy seems to have secured the nation from foreign attack, but to have produced new internal dangers. The struggles which remained for the faithful were against the godless among their own people, not against heathen enemies; so the Psalms of this period are mostly personal, and depict the alternating joy and woe of individuals rather than of the nation. The 6th and 13th Psalms are records of the victory of faith in depressing sickness and of the triumph of a good conscience over calumny¹. Like Job, the Psalmist is afflicted with sickness, which has prostrated his energies and threatens to cut short his career of service in God's cause by an untimely death², and is at the same time assailed by persecutors³ who, as birds of prey over the sinking traveller, exult over the progress of his malady, and long for his death⁴, as a crowning triumph in their war of persecution against the godly.

PSALM VI.

I.

The Psalmist appealeth to God for deliverance from sickness,

O Jehovah! rebuke me not in thine indignation,	1
neither chasten me in Thy displeasure!	
Have mercy upon me, Jehovah, for I am weak,	2
heal me, Jehovah, for my bones are vexed,	
my soul also is sore troubled;	3
but Thou, Jehovah,—Oh! how long—?	

II.

ere it be too late.

Turn Thee, O Jehovah, and deliver my soul, 4
O save me for Thy mercy's sake!
for in death no man remembereth Thee; 5
and who shall give Thee thanks in the grave?

III.

I am weary with my groaning, 6
every night wash I my bed;
and flood my couch with my tears;
mine eye is dim for very trouble 7
and waxed old because of all mine enemies.

IV.

He is assured that his prayer will be answered.

Away from me, all ye that work iniquity, 8
for Jehovah hath heard the voice of my weeping;
Jehovah hath heard my petition, 9
Jehovah will receive my prayer!
All mine enemies shall be confounded and sore vexed, 10
they shall be turned back and put to shame suddenly.

Ver. 3. Cp. § 34 Ps. xc. 13, "Turn Thee again, O Jehovah, how long—?"

PSALM XIII.

I.

The Psalmist despairing of God's help,

How long wilt Thou forget me, Jehovah, for ever,	1
how long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me?	
How long shall I have trouble in my soul	2
and be so vexed in my heart all the day long,	
how long shall mine enemy triumph over me?	

II.

O look upon me, and hear me, Jehovah my God!	3
Give light to mine eyes that I sleep not in death,	
lest mine enemy say; "I have prevailed against him!"	4
lest they that trouble me rejoice that I be cast down!	

III.

is comforted again.

But as for me—my trust is in Thy mercy;	5
let my heart be joyful in Thy help!	
let me sing to Jehovah, because He hath dealt lovingly with	
me.	6

Ver. 3. 'Lest this sleep into which I am now sinking be changed into the sleep of death.' Cp. § 26 Ps. vi. 5.

§ 28. PSALM XXX.

¹ §§ 26, 27.
Pss. vi, xiii.

² 27. 6, 7.

THE Psalmist passes now from the despairing elegy¹ to the joyous thanksgiving². In the calm after the storm he sees in quiet retrospect the working of God's ways in all that before had been perplexing to his faith, and in his gratitude he feels his heart warmed towards others who are still in suffering, and pours forth his experience as a lesson of trust to them, and an indication of God's mode of dealing with mankind³.

³ 27. 4, 5.

These Psalms of Thanksgiving were probably accompanied with music and dancing⁴, and were sung at a public festival in the Temple, while the vows which had been made in suffering were discharged by the appropriate offerings.

⁴ 7. 12.

⁵ 7. 4.

I.

The Psalmist praiseth God for his deliverance, and exhorteth others to praise Him.

I will magnify Thee, O Jehovah, for Thou hast set me up, 1
and not made my foes to triumph over me!

II.

O Jehovah! my God! 2

I cried unto Thee and Thou hast healed me;
Jehovah! Thou hast brought my soul out of the grave, 3
Thou hast called me into life from among them that are
gone down to the pit.

Sing praises unto Jehovah, O ye saints of His, 4
 and give thanks unto His holy name !
 For His wrath endureth but the twinkling of an eye ; His favour
 for a lifetime ; 5
 heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the
 morning.

III.

How his self-confidence was rebuked, but his prayer for life accepted.

But in my prosperity I said, 6
 "I shall never be removed !"
 Thou, Jehovah, of Thy goodness hadst made my hill so strong— 7
 Thou didst turn Thy face from me,—and I was troubled.
 Then cried I unto Thee, O Jehovah, 8
 and gat me to Jehovah right humbly ;
 "what profit is there in my blood, in my going down to the
 grave? 9
 "shall the dust give thanks unto Thee, or shall it declare
 Thy truth? 10
 "hear, Jehovah, and have mercy upon me, 11
 "Jehovah, be Thou my helper!"
 and Thou hast turned my heaviness into joy, 12
 Thou hast put off my sackcloth and girded me with glad-
 ness,
 that my glory may sing unto Thee without ceasing ; 13
 O Jehovah, my God, I will give thanks unto Thee for ever.

Ver. 3. A.V. *out of hell*. The Biblical expression for the lower world, the abode of the dead: hence often used where we should say 'death,' or 'the grave,' as it is in the Creed, so § 65 Ps. xvi. 11, "Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell." § 12 Ps. xviii. 4, "The pains of hell came about me:" where it is parallel with "the snares of death;" § 43 Ps. lv. 16, "Let them go down quick into hell," i. e. alive to the grave. Also § 61 Ps. ix. 17, § 118 Ps. cxxxix. 7.

Ver. 5. Cp. Isa. liv. 8. Isa. xvii. 14, "And behold at evening trouble, and before the morning he (the enemy) is not."

Ver. 6. *But in my prosperity I said*. Cp. Deut. viii. 12, 14, 17, "Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, thou say in thy heart, *my* power and the might of mine hand."

Ver. 7. Cp. § 132 Ps. civ. 29, "When Thou hidest Thy face they are troubled; when Thou takest away their breath they die, and are turned again to the dust."

Vv. 9—11 are the words of his prayer.

Ver. 10. *Thy truth*, i. e. fidelity, faithfulness to Thy servants who trust in Thee. Cp. § 72 Ps. xl. 12, "My talk hath been of Thy truth, and Thy salvation." § 52 Ps. lvii. 11, "For the greatness of Thy mercy reacheth unto the heavens, and Thy truth unto the clouds;" where it is parallel with 'the greatness of Thy mercy.'

Ver. 12. *my heaviness into joy*. Lit. 'mourning into dancing.' So in the next line, 'girded me with gladness,' refers to the dress of the dancer. Cp. Introduction.

Ver. 13. *glory*, or 'praise;' that God's glorious acts of deliverance may be vocal with His praise, that so He may receive the worship due to His name for His faithfulness to His servants. Cp. § 7 Ps. xxix. 1, "Ascribe unto the Lord worship and strength;" § 109 Ps. xcvi. 7; § 148 Ps. cxlix. 5, "That His saints may rejoice in glorifying Him."

§ 29. PSALM XLI.

THE 41st is another Psalm of Thanksgiving but of a somewhat different character from the last. It is marked by more personal feeling and cannot have been intended, at least originally, for a 'Temple hymn.' The bitterness of the hatred, which finds vent in it, points to a distracted time when family feuds were rife. The form which the cry for vengeance¹ takes seems to indicate that the writer¹ v. 11. was a man in authority, a prince or the chief of a house. He has been laid low by a deadly sickness, and at the same time has been harassed by the treachery of pretended friends, who have taken advantage of that sickness to spread malicious reports against him². The Psalmist's whole soul² Cp. Pss. vi, revolts at the baseness of their conduct. With the abhor- xiii. Introd. rence of a generous nature he scorns the verdict of the world which stamps the man as blessed who succeeds in raising himself on the ruin of the unfortunate, and appeals to the experience of his own life to shew that generosity is not unrewarded and that sympathy for the sick and suffering brings with it an indefeasible blessing. It is to this that he attributes God's favour towards him and his own marvellous recovery³.

³ v. 1—4 in connexion with v. 12.

I.

The blessing that attends sympathy for the suffering is shewn from the Psalmist's deliverance,

Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy! 1
 Jehovah delivereth him in the day of trouble.
 Jehovah preserveth him and keepeth him alive, that he may be
 blessed upon earth; 2
 Thou wilt not deliver him into the will of his enemies!
 Jehovah upholdeth him when he lieth sick upon his bed, 3
 Thou hast changed his bed of sickness into health.

II.

for when he appealed to God against the treacherous cruelty of his enemies

As for me—I said: “Jehovah, be merciful unto me! 4
 “heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee!
 “mine enemies speak evil of me: 5
 “‘when will he die, and his name perish?’
 “and if he come to see me, his heart deviseth evil; 6
 “he conceiveth mischief within himself, and when he cometh
 forth he telleth it.

III.

and their malignant joy at his suffering,

“All mine enemies whisper together against me, 7
 “even against me do they imagine evil:
 “‘Evil is poured out upon him, 8
 “‘and from the bed whereon he lieth, he shall rise up no
 more.’

“yea, even mine own familiar friend, whom I trusted, who did
 also eat of my bread, 9
 “hath lifted up his heel against me !

IV.

his prayer was accepted.

“But be Thou merciful unto me, O Jehovah, and raise me¹
 up, 10
 “and I shall requite them ;
 “by this I know Thou favourest me, 11
 “that mine enemy doth not triumph over me.”
 And in mine innocency Thou didst hold me fast, 12
 and didst set me before Thy face for ever.

Ver. 1. *Poor and needy, i. e.* the sick and suffering. For this meaning of the word ‘Poor,’ as equivalent to ‘in misery,’ cp. in § 72 Ps. xl. ver. 20 with vv. 2, 15, § 63 Ps. lxix. 30.

Vv. 1—3. The Psalmist passes from the general blessing on sympathy for the suffering to the special blessing which he feels has attended his sympathy with others in misfortune.

Ver. 6. *Come to see me, i. e.* to visit him on his bed of sickness. He singles out one of his enemies as specially employed on this treacherous mission: cp. ver. 9.

Ver. 8. *evil is poured out upon him, i. e.* an evil death as the fate of evil deeds. The Psalmist quotes here the words of evil which they are said to whisper (ver. 7).

Ver. 9. *To lift up the heel*, a frequent metaphor. Cp. Deut. xxxii. 15, “waxed fat and kicked,” and 1 Sam. ii. 29.

Ver. 12. The connexion is, ‘I said, “Jehovah, be merciful to me,” and ‘Thou (didst hear my prayer, and) didst hold me fast in my innocency ;’ all which intervenes between ver. 4 and ver. 12 is parenthetical, being the words of the Psalmist’s prayer which was thus favourably received.

The A. V. has a 13th verse: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel world without end. Amen." But this is merely the general Doxology which closes the First Book of the Hebrew Psalter (i—xli), and has no special reference to this particular Psalm. Cp. the close of books ii, iii, iv: § 63 Ps. lxxii. 18, 19 (and 20 in A. V.); § 124 Ps. lxxxix. 50; § 133 cvi. 46. See Appendix A on the arrangement of the present Psalter.

§ 30. PSALM LXVI. 12—18.

THIS part of the 66th Psalm is complete in itself and is inserted here as being like the preceding a Psalm of Thanksgiving for personal deliverance. It has been attached to the conclusion of the totally distinct Psalm contained in Ver. 1—11¹. The difference is marked not only by the change to the singular number but by the great dissimilarity of their subjects. The one Psalm (§ 116) is a national thanksgiving for deliverance from captivity², whereas the other, contained in this section, has a special personal reference throughout³ and was obviously intended, like Ps. xxx⁴, to be sung in the Temple during the offering of the sacrifices which had been vowed in the time of need.

¹ See § 116 and § 24, note on Composite Psalms.

² *vv.* 5, 10, 11.

³ Cp. esp. *vv.* 16—18.

⁴ § 28.

I.

The prelude to a sacrifice of Thanksgiving.

I will go into Thine house with burnt offerings,	12
and will pay Thee my vows,	
which I promised with my lips,	
and spake with my mouth when I was in trouble.	

I will bring unto Thee fatlings with the sweet savour of rams, 13
 I will offer bullocks and goats.

II.

The Psalmist declareth God's special goodness towards him, because of his innocency.

O come hither and hearken, all ye that fear God, 14
 and I will tell you what He hath done for my soul!
 I gave Him praises with my mouth, 15
 yea, I called unto Him with my tongue:
 "if I incline unto wickedness with mine heart, 16
 the Lord will not hear me."

III.

But 'God hath heard me, 17
 and considered the voice of my prayer.
 Praised be God,
 who hath not cast out my prayer, 18
 nor turned His mercy from me.

Ver. 15. *with my tongue.* Lit. 'I called unto Him with my mouth, praise under my tongue;' the word which the mouth dwells on being compared to a hidden treasure, as in Job xx. 12: "Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue, though he spare it and forsake it not, but keep it still within his mouth."

Ver. 16 is a quotation from his prayer. The Psalmist repeats here only one thought out of all the contents of his former prayer: he had purified his heart before he dared to address the Lord, and he feels it was this which won the answer to his prayer.

§ 31. PSALM XII.

¹ §§ 28—30.
xxx, xli, lxvi.

² As in vi.
and xiii.

HERE there is a transition from thanksgiving¹ to elegy; but the cause of lamentation is not now the personal sufferings and persecutions of the faithful², but the far more depressing thought of the growing corruption of the whole nation.

³ *vv.* 2, 4, 8,
and note on
§ 47 Ps.
xxxvi.

⁴ *vv.* 5, 6.

⁵ *v.* 7.

The Psalmist is appalled by the rottenness of the society around him, in which unscrupulous ambition appears to rule supreme; in which truth is scorned as folly and the God of lies is enthroned in the temple of men's hearts³. But the voices of the prophets had already been raised against this corruption: Isaiah's mission had probably already begun, and the remembrance of the sure promise which had thus been given to Israel⁴, of the restitution of right and of the approach of a Divine judgment, brings comfort at last to the troubled spirit of the Psalmist⁵.

I.

The Psalmist craveth help of God

Help, Jehovah, for there is not one godly man left,	1
for faithfulness is minished from among the children of men;	
they talk vanity, every one with his neighbour;	2
they do but flatter with their lips and dissemble in their	
double heart.	

II.

against the pride of his oppressors;

May Jehovah root out all deceitful lips, 3
and the tongue that speaketh proud things,
which say, "with our tongue will we prevail, 4
"our lips are on our side, who is lord over us?"

III.

but he bethinketh him of the Prophet's words,

For the oppression of the needy, because of the deep sighing
of the poor, 5
"I will up," saith Jehovah,
"I will set him in safety that longeth for it."
The words of Jehovah are pure words, 6
like as silver which from earth is cleansed and purified seven
times in the fire.

IV.

and feeleth assured of God's protection.

Thou shalt keep them, O Jehovah, 7
Thou shalt preserve him from this generation for ever!
the ungodly walk on every side, 8
when wickedness exalteth itself among the children of men.

Ver. 2. *vanity*, *i. e.* falsehood: cp. § 142 Ps. cxliv. 11, where the parallelism shews its connexion with 'iniquity.'

Ver. 3. *proud things*, the proud speech is given in ver. 4.

Ver. 4. *with our tongue will we prevail*, or better, 'We are allied with our tongues.' They say in their hearts, if not openly, 'Our god is that which wins us our way in the world, viz. Deceit and Lies.' Cp. Hab. i. 11, 16, "They sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous." Cp. Phil. iii. 19.

Ver. 6. *The words of Jehovah*, with reference to the oracle of God quoted in ver. 5. *earth*, *i. e.* from alloy of earthy particles and dross.

Ver. 7. *them*, the godly of ver. 1. *him*, the godly sufferer who longeth for God's salvation [ver. 6].

Ver. 8. The last verse is merely a description of *this generation*.

§§ 32, 33. PSALMS LXII. AND XXXIX.

THE similarity of these Psalms suggests the idea that they may have been written by one author. That author speaks as a prophet. In Psalm lxii. we have a picture of the isolation of this prophet in an unequal struggle with the apostates of his time. In their fierce jealousy they were attempting to drag him down from his spiritual pre-eminence. But 'his strength' was in 'quietness and confidence,' and thus supported, he is enabled to address the right-minded with words in which all men so circumstanced have ever found consolation and encouragement.

§ 32. PSALM LXII.

I.

Resignation of true faith

Wait only in silence upon God, O my soul! 1
 for of Him cometh my salvation;
 He only is my rock and my salvation, 2
 He is my defence; I shall not greatly fall!

II.

amid the attacks of apostates.

How long do ye all assail a man, and break him in pieces? 3
 as a tottering wall,
 a wall to be broken down?
 Their device is only how to thrust him from his height; 4
 their delight is in lies,
 they give good words in their mouth but curse with their
 heart!
 Nevertheless, my soul, wait only in silence upon God! 5
 for my hope is in Him;
 He only is my rock and my salvation, 6
 He is my defence; I shall not fall!
 in God is my help and my glory, 7
 the rock of my might, and my refuge is in God.

III.

The emptiness of human strength.

O put your trust in Him alway, ye people, 8
 pour out your hearts before Him;
 for God is our refuge.

The children of men are but a breath, and the sons of the
mighty a lie : 9
lay them on the balance,
they are but a breath all together !
O trust not in wrong, and take no pride in robbery : 10
if riches increase, set not your heart upon them !
God spake once ; twice also have I heard the same ; 11
that power belongeth unto God !
And Thou, O Lord, art merciful : 12
for Thou rewardest every man according to his work !

Ver. 1. Cp. Exod. xiv. 13.

Ver. 11. *Twice also, i. e. 'often.'* Cp. Job xxxiii. 14, "God speaketh, yea twice," and Job xl. 5.

§ 33. PSALM XXXIX.

"THE most beautiful of all the elegies in the Psalter."

The struggle depicted here is not a struggle with wicked men but with the terrors of a mortal sickness, which to the men of these early times were so great, that even the bravest who felt no fear before the attacks of the enemy quailed¹ before the fear of death.

¹ Cp. §§ 26, 27. Pss. vi. & xiii.

The inward agony of the Psalmist is increased by the dread that by pouring out his heart before those who scoffed against² Jehovah and His worship he should expose himself and his cause to misconstruction and contempt. He feels that he must bear his pain in silence.

² v. 1—3. But the pain though³ long suppressed at length obtains the mastery, and the struggle between these two opposite

feelings issues in this vehement outburst of despair, which gradually subsides in passing from the thought⁴ of the ⁴ Cp. note. frailty of man to the contemplation of the overruling providence of God. In hope and in prayer to Him the desponding heart finds comfort, the highest to which we can attain short of that higher hope of victory over death. The remarkable similarity between this Psalm and the speeches of Job, ch. iii—xxxi. can hardly be accidental, and a careful comparison of the two would lead to the belief that the Psalm was known to the writer of Job and might have occasioned the attempt which is there made to find a higher solution for the difficulties and perplexities of the problem of life.

I.

The Psalmist would fain keep silence before the wicked, but pain compelleth him to speak.

- | | |
|---|---|
| I said, "let me take heed to my ways, | 1 |
| that I offend not with my tongue : | |
| let me keep my mouth as it were with a bridle, | 2 |
| while the ungodly is in my sight !" | |
| I held my tongue and spake not of my desire, | 3 |
| but it was pain and grief to me. | |
| My heart was hot within me, | 4 |
| while I was musing the fire kindled : | |
| at the last I spake with my tongue ; | |
| "O Jehovah, let me know mine end, | 5 |
| and the number of my days, how long I have to live, | |
| that I may know how frail I am ! | |

Behold, Thou hast made my days as it were a span long, 6
and mine age is even as nothing before Thee :
verily every man living is but a breath !
Man walketh as a vain shadow ; 7
he disquieteth himself in vain :
he heapeth up riches and cannot tell who shall gather them !

II.

Amid his misery he findeth help in God, yet the wrath of God is terrible to human weakness :

And now, Lord, what is my hope ? 8
truly my hope is even in Thee !
deliver me from all mine offences, 9
make me not a rebuke unto the foolish !
I am become dumb, and open not my mouth : 10
for it is Thy doing !
take Thy rod away from me, 11
I am even consumed by the means of Thy heavy hand !
When Thou with rebukes dost chasten man for sin, 12
and frettest away his beauty as a moth,
every man is but a breath !

III.

he therefore seeketh rest in an appeal to God's compassion.

Hear my prayer, O Jehovah, and give heed to my complaint, 13
hold not Thy peace at my tears !
for I am a stranger with Thee, 14
and a sojourner as all my fathers were ;
turn away Thy face from me that I may recover my gladness, 15
before I go hence and be no more seen !"

Ver. 3. *desire*, literally, of the good which I had lost and which I wished to regain.

Ver. 12. Cp. Job xiii. 28.

Ver. 14. Cp. Gen. xlvii. 9.

Ver. 15. *Thy face*, i. e. 'the look of Thy displeasure,' Job vii. 19; xiv. 6.

Note. Cp. § 81 Ps. lxxvii. 10, "And I said, It is mine infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most Highest."

§ 34. PSALM XC.

THIS has been called the funeral hymn of the world.

The troubles of the times in which the Psalmist had been cast made him realize to the full the great truth of the frailty of man and the transitoriness of all that is human. But this truth has a far different significance to the spiritual and to the worldly man. To the latter it brings either despair or recklessness; a folding of the hands in fatalistic indifference, or the spirit of 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' To the former it is the counterpart of the higher truth of the eternity of God; the lesson it teaches to him is not despair but resignation, not fatalism or frivolity but the heavenly wisdom, from which he learns that the criterion of man's greatness is not his power of resistance to God, but his power to co-operate with God's work and to bring his own into harmony with God's will. The highest prayer which man can offer to God is "Thy will be done," and it is only when the union is complete between the human and the divine will that the work of man can gain a blessing for itself and exert a lasting influence on the world.

I.

Power of God; man's weakness.

Lord! THOU hast been our refuge from one generation to another! 1
Before the mountains were brought forth, 2
or ever the earth and the world were made,
from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God.
Thou turnest man to destruction, 3
again Thou sayest, "Come again, ye children of men:"
(for a thousand years in Thy sight 4
are but as yesterday when it vanisheth,
and as a watch in the night;)
so their generations are as a dream in the morning, 5
yea, even as the grass which groweth up in the morning;
in the morning it is green and groweth up, 6
in the evening it is dried up and withered.

II.

Sin, the source of man's weakness.

For we consume away in Thy displeasure, 7
and are afraid at Thy wrathful indignation:
Thou hast set our misdeeds before Thee, 8
and our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance.
For when Thou art angry all our days are gone, 9
we bring our years to an end as a sound that dieth away.
The days of our age are threescore and ten or scarce fourscore
years; 10
yea, even their strength is but vanity and a thing of nought,
so soon passeth it away, and we are gone.

Who knoweth the power of Thy wrath? 11
 for even as Thy majesty so is Thy displeasure.
 Teach us then to number our days, 12
 and to bring the offering of an understanding heart.

III.

A prayer for the return of God's favour.

Turn Thee again, O Jehovah? Oh! how long—? 13
 be gracious unto Thy servants!
 O refresh us with Thy mercy and that soon, 14
 so shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life!
 comfort us again now after the days that Thou hast plagued us, 15
 and the years wherein we have suffered adversity!
 Show Thy servants Thy work, 16
 and their children Thy glory!
 And the glorious majesty of the Lord our God be upon us! 17
 prosper Thou the work of our hands upon us,
 O prosper Thou our handy-work!

Ver. 2. So of Wisdom. Prov. viii. 25:

"Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth—
 while as yet He had not made the earth nor the fields, * *
 when He prepared the heavens, I was there;
 when He set a compass upon the face of the deep."

Ver. 4. *yesterday, when it vanisheth, i. e.* its seeming shortness at the moment of its departure.

Ver. 5. There is here a double comparison,—a dream, and the flowers of Palestine, which spring up in the morning and are killed by the midday sun. For the former cp. § 33 Ps. xxxix. 7; § 80 lxxiii. 19; Isaiah xxix. 8; for the latter cp. § 62 Ps. xxxvii. 2; Job xiv. 2; Isaiah xxxvii. 27.

Ver. 8. Jeremiah xxxii. 19, "For Thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the children of men, to give every one according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings."

Ver. 10. *their strength, i. e.* the prime of our years, when our strength is at the height.

Ver. 11. *majesty, i. e.* dreadfulness. Ezekiel i. 18.

Ver. 13. *how long? i. e.* how long will it be before Thou turnest? Cp. § 124 Ps. lxxxix. 45; Isai. vi. 11; Rev. vi. 10.

Ver. 15. *after, i. e.* according to or in proportion to, as in the Litany, 'Neither reward us after our iniquities.'

Ver. 16. *Thy work.* The great work which is here prayed for is the work of the Deliverer or Messiah, to which the Prophets of the 8th century so often refer. Isa. xxviii. 21; xxix. 23; Hab. iii. 2. Cp. Notes to § 37 Ps. lxxvi. and § 63 Ps. lxxii. on Expectations of a Messiah.

§§ 35—39. PSALMS XLVI, XLVIII, LXXVI, LXXV, LXV,
CELEBRATING THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB
AND THE REPULSE OF THE ASSYRIAN INVASION.

FEW events in the history of Israel so powerfully influenced the national character as the destruction of the host of Sennacherib. Men saw in it an irresistible proof of divine deliverance from their misery and oppression. The golden age of Moses and David seemed to have returned. Heretofore they had heard with their ears, now they saw with their eyes the mighty deliverance of God¹. New thoughts naturally sprang into life. The first of these was increased reverence for the Holy City and the Temple², from whose sacred walls the fury of the oppressor had glanced harmlessly away. The hope faith and aspiration of the true in heart centred on the Temple, as the visible emblem of the protection of God.

Secondly, the more they realized the foundation on which their national glory rested, the more did they become con-

¹ § 36 Ps. xlviii. 9.

² §§ 35, 36 Ps. xlvii, xlviii.

vinced of the transitory nature of heathen empires and the rottenness that lies at their core. The true source of power was the Invisible. Others, in the words of the Psalmist, might 'put their trust in chariots and horses,' but they would remember the name of the Lord their God.

Lastly, there dawned upon the Jews the hope that even the most distant heathen might come to rejoice in the light of the true God³.

³ §§ 37, 38
Pss. lxxvi,
lxxv.

These and kindred thoughts are powerfully expressed in the following Psalms⁴ and even more fully by the prophet Isaiah, to whom or to whose school the earlier of these Psalms at least may probably be referred.

⁴ §§ 35—38
Pss. xlvi,
xlviii, lxxvi,
lxxv.

§ 35. PSALM XLVI.

I.

God a refuge in storm and tempest.

God is our refuge and strength, 1
a very present help in trouble,
therefore will we not fear though the earth do quake, 2
though the mountains totter in the midst of the sea,
though the waters thereof rage and swell, 3
and though the mountains shake at the tempest of the same.
Jehovah, Lord of Hosts, is with us,
the God of Jacob is our tower of strength.

II.

As the stream of Siloam, so hath been His presence to the besieged.

'There is a stream the waters whereof make glad the city of
God, 4
the holy places of the tabernacle of the most Highest:

God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; 5
God will help her, the morning draweth nigh.
The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved, 6
His thunder roared, the earth trembleth.
Jehovah, Lord of Hosts, is with us, 7
the God of Jacob is our tower of strength.

III.

His wonders in destroying the Assyrians.

Come hither and behold the work of Jehovah, 8
what wonders He hath wrought upon the earth:
He maketh wars to cease in all the world, 9
He breaketh the bows, and knappeth the spears in sunder,
and burneth the chariots in the fire.
'Be still then, and know that I am God, 10
'I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted
in the earth.'
Jehovah, Lord of Hosts, is with us, 11
the God of Jacob is our tower of strength.

Ver. 1. This was Luther's favourite Psalm in times of peril; he founded on it the well-known hymn, 'Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott.'

Ver. 3. The burden has been inserted after Ewald. The Psalm was apparently composed for a public festivity with a burden to be sung by the multitude after each of the three divisions.

Ver. 4. Compared with the waterless deserts around, Judæa and Jerusalem were well watered, and drought pressed more severely on the besiegers than the besieged. The allusion here is to the well-known rill and pool of Siloam. So in Isaiah viii. 6, the blessing of God's protection is represented by the waters of Siloah, which go softly.

Ver. 9. The horses of the Assyrian army were smitten as well as the soldiers, and the chariots left were burned as useless.

I.

Beauty of Sion, the dwelling of God.

Great is Jehovah and worthy to be praised, 1
 in the city of our God, even upon His holy hill.
 Beauteous on high,—the joy of the whole earth,— 2
 is the hill of Sion, in the sides of the north,
 the fortress of the great King.
 God hath revealed Himself within her towers
 as a sure refuge.
God upholdeth the same for ever!

II.

Terror of the allied kings at the sight of her.

For, lo! the kings of the earth took counsel, 3
 and marched up together:
 they cast a look upon her and marvelled, 4
 they were astonished and sore afraid:
 fear took hold upon them there, 5
 and pain as of a woman in travail,
 through a storm from the east 6
 that breaketh in pieces ships of Tarshish.
 Like as we have heard, so have we seen
 in the city of Jehovah, Lord of Hosts, the city of our God; 7
God upholdeth the same for ever!

III.

Judah celebrateth God's loving-kindness in the Temple.

We think on Thy loving-kindness, O God, 8
 in the midst of Thy Temple:

according to Thy name of God, so soundeth Thy praise to the world's end ;	9
Thy right hand is full of righteousness.	
Mount Sion rejoiceth,	10
the daughters of Judah are glad, because of Thy judgments!	
Walk about Sion and go round about her,	11
tell ye the towers thereof,	
mark well her bulwarks, count up her strong places—	12
that ye may tell them that come after!	
For this God is our God, for ever and ever,	13
<i>He will be our guide for everlasting.</i>	

Ver. 1. This was plainly designed as a Temple-song (ver. 8). The burthen has been introduced at the end of the first division, as in the preceding Psalm.

Ver. 2. Sion, though 300 feet lower than the Mount of Olives, had from its sanctity a grandeur to the Jews far above all hills. See § 114 Ps. lxxviii. 16. *sides of the north.* See Isa. xiv. 13. "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven. I will sit also on the sides of the north." The oriental heathens regarded the extreme north as the Elborg or dwelling of their Gods. It was to them what Olympus was to the Greeks, the Walhalla to the Teutons and Scandinavians. Not unnaturally, the Psalmist in speaking of the Assyrians applies their term to Jerusalem the real residence of God.

Ver. 6. Awe fell upon them as they beheld Sion, and broke their ranks as a tempest broke the fleet of Jehoshaphat at Eziongeber. See 1 Kings xxii. 48.

Ver. 11. See Isaiah xxxiii. 18. The Assyrians had counted the towers of Sion for destruction.

§ 37. PSALM LXXVI.

IN the 46th Psalm we hear, as it were, the summons to the inhabitants of Jerusalem to come and behold upon the battle-field the mighty works of the Lord, the broken bow and spear, and the horseless chariot burning in the fire¹. ¹ Cp. § 35, Ps. xlv. 6.

In the 48th we seem to hear them rendering thanks for their deliverance to Jehovah, but Jehovah is still the God of the Hebrew alone. In this and the following Psalm we find the wider and nobler thoughts which in calmer moments the Assyrian overthrow called into life. It is as though the wall of partition had already fallen and revealed to the eye a glimpse of the Messianic kingdom², where all the nations ² Cp. note. of the earth should be united together in the knowledge and worship of the true God.

I.

God is great in Sion, and breaketh the rod of the oppressor;

In Judah is God known,	1
His name is great in Israel,	
for at Salem He made His tabernacle,	2
and His resting-place in Sion.	
There brake He the arrows of the bow,	3
the shield, the sword and the battle!	

II.

none may resist His might,

Full of brightness art Thou, more glorious	4
than the strongholds of robbers.	

The proud were stripped, they slept their sleep, 5
 and all the men of might found not their hands;
 at Thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, 6
 both chariot and horse lie fallen.

III.

for He executeth righteous judgments upon the nations of the earth;

Thou, even Thou art to be feared, 7
 and who may stand in Thy sight when Thou art angry?
 Thou didst cause judgment to peal forth from heaven, 8
 the earth trembled—and was still,
 when God arose to judgment, 9
 to keep all the meek upon the earth.

IV.

the furious shall bow before Him, and all nations shall do Him homage.

For the fierceness of men shall turn to Thy praise, 10
 the residue of fierceness shall do Thee honour.
 Promise unto Jehovah your God and keep your vows! 11
 let all that are around Him do homage to His majesty!
 He moweth down the pride of princes, 12
 He is terrible to the kings of the earth.

Ver. 2. Salem, poetical abbreviation of Jerusalem, betokeneth the dwelling of peace, the abode of Jehovah, before whose walls the fury of battle must cease.

Ver. 3. *arrows*. Lit. 'The lightnings of the bow,' see Zech. ix. 14, 'And his arrow shall go forth as the lightning.'

Ver. 4. *strongholds*, i.e. the fortresses from which the Assyrians swept down upon Jerusalem. According to ancient custom their walls had gleamed with the splendour of the invaders' shields. See Cant. iv. 4, "Thy neck is like the tower of Damascus, builded for an armoury, whereon they hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men." Ezekiel (xxvii. 11), speaking of the splendid appearance of Tyre, says, "They hanged their shields upon thy walls round

about: they have made thy beauty perfect." See Stanley, *Jewish Church*, Part II. Chap. xxvi. note, to which the above references are due.

Ver. 5. *The proud*, i. e. the warriors were stripped of their gleaming arms and powerless as though they had lost their hands and were sleeping the sleep of death.

Ver. 10. A new view of the judgments of Jehovah. He chasteneth the heathen that they may turn to Him. Many are fallen, but the remnant shall learn His power and worship His name with praise.

NOTE ON THE ORIGIN OF MESSIANIC EXPECTATIONS.

AMONG the many national characteristics which elevated the Jews above the other nations of antiquity, none is more striking than their power of living in and for the future. Nothing in the rich heritage of religious life and aspirations has been more fruitful in important consequences than this. The character of the Israelites full of religious confidence and perseverance even to obstinacy was indeed a favourable soil for the development of such a seed: but its origin must be sought in the revelation of the unity of God and of the eternal justice by which the world is ruled. In any attempt to trace a part of God's revelation of Himself in the government of the world and in the heart of man, it is hardly possible to lay too much stress on the selection of the Jews for the reception of this fundamental religious truth, and their capacity of framing upon it their whole national and domestic life.

Such a revelation, working on a religious assurance which loved to regard the Israelites as a chosen and favoured people, could not but produce great ideas alike in their prosperity and their adversity. In the hour of their prosperity the vulgar looked for a wider empire and a still higher state of material welfare: the pious few longed for a time when righteousness should go hand in hand with wealth and the nation be under the direct inspiration of the Almighty. In dark times when the chosen people bowed beneath the rod of the idolater or the infidel, then their hope burned brightest of all. Other nations could solve the problem of suffering righteousness and triumphant sin, either by putting evil on a level with

good and assigning to each passion its appropriate deity, or by abandoning the world to the reign of chance, could acquiesce in the apparently capricious bestowal of happiness and suffering through the denial of all moral order and government in the world. The Jews on the contrary interpreted the past and looked forward to the future by the light of a revelation which raised them above the domain of accident and the limits of human life. In their ears had rung the words 'I am the God that brought thee out of the Land of Egypt. Thou shalt have no other Gods than me.' 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord Thy God is one God,' and again, 'Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit to revive the humble. There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked.' Such revelations rendered fatalistic despair and fatalistic security equally impossible and made the divine government visible beneath the confusions of the world.

To them these anomalies were for a time. God would vindicate Himself. Impious men and impious nations stood upon slippery ground: the righteous alone was firmly planted, and his seed should endure for ever. God would avenge His saints and execute 'righteous judgment on the earth.' Thus in moments of intense national suffering prophets raised the hope of their countrymen by depicting the house of David triumphant once again and the nations smitten down in a day of judgment and retribution, or consoled their sorrow by describing the Anointed of God uniting hostile tribes under a reign of peace and love and leading all people to one fold under one Shepherd.

As in individual life it is the peculiar blessing of the 'pure in heart' to 'see God,' to trace the working of His hand not so much in the bestowal of special blessings as in the sanctification of ordinary life, so in the history of the Jewish nation, it was a step fraught with momentous consequences when, from a belief in the exertion of the Divine power on special occasions, they rose to the far higher revelation of the Almighty ruling through the order which He has

appointed in His world. In the earlier period of their history it seemed that God's participation in the government of the world must be occasional and extraordinary. Even to Samuel it was not revealed at once that the change inevitably required by the progress of the world from the irregular government of the Judges to the regularity and system of the monarchy was a part of the Divine plan¹. Thus the idea of the intervention of Jehovah through the agency of an established line of rulers, which after the reign of David was the moving idea of religious thought inseparably linked with the future of David's house, was originally not only hostile but almost fatal to the attempt to establish the monarchy at all². The idea of fixing Jehovah's vicegerents to a particular line seemed to Samuel impious and tantamount to rejecting Jehovah Himself. Saul's prophetic inspiration³ proved him to be the man whom God had destined for the throne. When the inspiration ceased his title to the kingdom ceased with it, and the throne was bestowed on another inspired member of the prophet's company. Then as afterwards the prophet was raised above the king by his inspiration: for the same reason he was above the priest also.

In David prophecy kingship priesthood were united⁴ and his many sided character backed by the prophetic blessing made him to his own people the anointed representative of Jehovah, and a type to subsequent ages of the anointed prophet and deliverer of the nation.

As is necessarily the case with every religious belief which relates to the future, the idea of God's anointed or the coming 'Messiah' was different to different classes and in different times. To the vulgar it presented itself in the material aspect of a mighty conqueror establishing an earthly kingdom: the higher minds longed for a visible representative of the purposes of Jehovah and a kingdom wherein dwelleth righteousness. David's character answered both conceptions. He that rose from the sheepfold to the throne, and

¹ Cp. 1 Sam. viii. 22.

² Cp. Introduction to § 16 Ps. ii.

³ 1 Sam. x. 6, 11.

⁴ Cp. § 10 Ps. cx. 4.

extended his dominion from Jordan to the Euphrates, was a fit type of one who should make Israel triumphant over every foe. The man after God's own heart was a worthy ancestor for the ideal ruler of the most religious and spiritual minds. Thus it was that the first prophetic declaration of the future glory of the house of David sank deeper and deeper into the heart of the nation, as each successive ruler failed to satisfy the hopes of his contemporaries, and the military and spiritual greatness of the national hero of the past was magnified by comparison with his worthless or at best but partially successful descendants¹.

Thus the conviction that David was the true type and only worthy ancestor of the anointed of Jehovah who was to bring salvation to the falling empire and renewal to the spiritual life of the nation, gained greater strength and vitality as time rolled on,—as the Jews saw more and more from contact with heathen empires that he is God's true vicegerent who strives to establish not his own empire but that of God, who comes to do not his own will but the will of Him that sent him.

¹ 2 Sam. vii. 5—17.

§ 38. PSALM LXXV.

THE overthrow of the Assyrians bore to the prophets a deeper meaning than the mere deliverance of the hour. It was to them the visible pledge that God will for ever execute judgment in the earth, and supplied a terrible warning against arrogance and pride in the Jews as well as among the heathen nations.

I.

God at His appointed seasons appeareth to judge the world;

Unto Thee, O God, did we give thanks,

1

we gave thanks to Thee, and Thy name is nigh;

men told of Thy wondrous works. 2
 'For I choose an appointed time; (*saith Jehovah*) 3
 'I, even I, judge according to right;
 'the earth quaketh and all the inhabitants thereof; 4
 'I have established the pillars of it.'

II.

For to Him and to no earthly power doth judgment belong.

I say unto the fools, 'deal not so madly!' 5
 and to the ungodly, 'set not up your horn!'
 set not up your horn on high, 6
 and speak not with a stiff neck!
 for neither from the east, nor from the west, 7
 nor from the desert, nor from the hills—
 but God will judge; 8
 He putteth down one and setteth up another!
 In the hand of Jehovah there is a cup, 9
 the wine is red, full mixed, He poureth out of the same;
 as for the dregs thereof, all the ungodly of the earth 10
 shall drink them, and suck them out.

III.

Praise is due to Jehovah for ever, who judgeth the folk righteously.

But I will talk of the God of Jacob, 11
 and sing praises unto Him for ever;
 'all the horns of the ungodly also will I break, (*saith Jehovah*) 12
 'and the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.'

Ver. 2. *i. e.* Thy presence is revealed in the wondrous works which we have seen. This serves to introduce the words of Jehovah, proclaiming that His judgment cometh at the right time, unalterable as the everlasting hills, on which as pillars He hath established the earth.

Ver. 3. The word *horn* was used by the Hebrews metaphorically to express either honour, as § 136 Pss. cxii. 9, § 123 cxxxii. 18, etc., or strength, Mic. iv. 13, "I will make thine horn iron." Deut. xxxiii. 17, etc. To humble and cast down was often represented by the figure of breaking or cutting off the horn, as here (ver. 11). Lam. ii. 3, "Cut off all the horn of Israel." To exalt the horn of any one was to bestow honour and dignity upon him or make it bud. Cp. §§ 123, 124 Pss. cxxxii. 18, lxxxix. 18. Ezek. xxix. 21. Here to lift up the horn betokens presumption. It was also somewhat later a symbol for kingdom. Zech. i. 18 and Daniel.

Ver. 7. *the desert*, i.e. the desert towards Egypt—the South: the hills are those of Hermon and Lebanon to the North. The meaning of the passage is, Judgment comes not from the visible portions of the earth but from the invisible hand of God. He as Lord of the house offereth to each the cup of retribution and tribulation as here, or of blessing, as in § 65 Ps. xvi. 6. Cp. Jer. xxv. 15.

§ 39. PSALM LXV.

WE have here a Psalm of thanksgiving to be sung in the Temple during a public festivity, at which the sacrifices were to be offered which had been vowed during a long and protracted drought¹. To the thanksgiving however for a gracious rain and the hope of an abundant harvest², is added gratitude for a signal deliverance during a time of distress and commotion affecting all the nations around³. Thus the Psalm becomes a song of praise to Jehovah as the God of History and the God of Nature alike. It is not impossible that the dispersion of the Jews had already begun, and the thought of their brethren in distant lands gave to the pious inhabitants of Jerusalem a keener sense of the beauty of the Temple and of the pleasure of attending its services⁴.

¹ *Ps.* 1, 2.
² *Ps.* 9—14.
³ *Ps.* 7, 8.
⁴ *Ps.* 4, 5,
compared
with Isaiah
xl. 11—xii. 3.

I.

Worthy is Jehovah to be praised

Unto Thee, O God, belongeth praise in Sion, 1
and unto Thee shall the vow be performed!
'Thou that hearest prayer, 2
unto Thee doth all flesh come!
mine iniquity troubleth me sore; 3
as for our sins, Thou shalt be merciful unto them!
blessed is he whom Thou choosest and takest to dwell in
Thy courts; 4
let us rejoice in the beauty of Thy house, in the Holy
place of Thy Temple!

II.

in the works of nature and His dealings with the children of men;

Wonderfully dost 'Thou show us grace, O God of our salvation, 5
'Thou that art the hope of all the ends of the world and
of the uttermost sea!
who in His strength setteth fast the mountains, 6
and is girded about with power;
who stilleth the raging of the sea and the noise of His waves 7
and the madness of the peoples,
so that they that dwell in the ends of the earth are afraid at
Thy tokens; 8
Thou fillest the outgoings of morning and evening with joy!

III.

so also for the gracious rain which He hath sent upon the land.

Thou hast visited the earth and watered it, 9
 and enriched it with the rain of heaven in full stream;
 Thou refreshedst her corn, for so Thou refreshest the earth; 10
 Thou wateredst her furrows and washedst down the ridges
 thereof, 11
 Thou madest it soft with showers,
 and blessedst the springing of it.
 Thou hast crowned the year with Thy goodness 12
 and Thy footsteps drop fatness.
 The very pastures of the wilderness drop fatness, 13
 and the hills deck themselves with rejoicing,
 the meadows clothe themselves with flocks; 14
 the valleys also stand so thick with corn,
 that they rejoice and shout for joy.

Ver. 4. See Isa. xi. 11—xii. 3. Already the sorrows of exile had prevented many from attending the festivals at Jerusalem.

Ver. 6. *girded* as the Lord of Hosts in battle. *setteth fast the mountains*, with especial reference to the impregnability of the hill of Sion during the Assyrian siege. Cp. § 92 Ps. cxxv. 1, "They that trust in the Lord shall be even as Mount Sion, which may not be removed, but standeth fast for ever."

Ver. 12. Compare Job xxxviii. 26—30.

Ver. 14. *they*, this is interpreted by some commentators as referring to the cultivators, 'that men rejoice etc.'

§§ 40—63. PSALMS COMPOSED AFTER THE ASSYRIAN
INVASION.

THE overthrow of the Assyrians strengthened for a time the hands of the faithful worshippers of Jehovah, and facilitated the reforms of Hezekiah. The reformation however was only superficial and due rather to the influence of Isaiah upon the court than to any real impression made on the people at large. Idolatry had been generally connected with the foreign policy of the kings of Judah, as a necessary step towards extending their relations with foreign nations. The masses, no doubt, were easily influenced by the seductive argument of worldly advantage. In David's time, the golden era of the Jewish monarchy, religious zeal and national prosperity had been united as never before and were naturally regarded as inseparable. The doctrine that prosperity is the test of the possession of religious truth, perilous at all times, was especially dangerous in a materialistic age, when the Hebrews felt themselves surpassed in wealth empire and military renown. It was a true instinct which made the officers of Hezekiah¹ beg Rabshakeh to speak in the Syrian tongue. They knew that the material prosperity, the splendour and centralization of the Assyrians would prove to the vulgar an unanswerable argument in favour of the Assyrian religion. Even Hezekiah, yielding probably to the popular wish, concluded an alliance with

¹ 2 Kings
xviii. 16.

Egypt and thus paved the way for the iniquities of Manasseh. To the sensuality inseparable from oriental idolatry this monarch added the most pitiless persecution. Nothing was omitted which could insult and eradicate the worship of Jehovah. The faithful few glowed not only with indignation at the outrages offered to their religion and their God, but with the bitter feelings of a persecuted faction which daily sealed its confession in blood amidst the triumph and mockery of the dissolute and profane.

Such a period was obviously ill calculated to produce the highest forms of religious poetry. Most of the Psalms composed in it breathe the spirit only too natural to such an epoch. Some¹ are pervaded by the feelings excited by oppression and persecution: in others² despair and bitterness yield to the soothing influences of a pure and unshaken faith. Those however who find in the maledictory portions of the Psalms sentiments repugnant to the charitable dictates of their own religion should bear in mind that the Psalter—the imperishable monument of the poetical and religious inspiration of the Hebrews—was composed before God had revealed Himself to the world as a God not only of vengeance but of mercy.

¹ § 40 Ps. cxl.

² § 42 Ps.
cxlii., § 47
Ps. xxxvi.

§§ 40—42. PSALMS CXL, CXLI, CXLII.

TO this time must be referred Pss. cxl, cxli, cxlii. The similarity of the position of the Psalmist, the employment of the same metaphors, and the absence of any mention of Jerusalem, may induce us to believe that their juxtaposition in the Psalter is due not to accidental arrangement but to their common authorship.

§ 40. PSALM CXL

CONTAINS a prayer to Jehovah for deliverance from the violence and treachery of the idolatrous faction.

I.

Prayer for deliverance from the malice

Deliver me, O Jehovah, from the evil man,	1
and preserve me from the violent man,	
who imagine mischief in their heart,	2
and stir up strife all the day long:	
they have sharpened tongues like a serpent,	3
adders' poison is under their lips.	

II.

and snares of the ungodly.

Keep me, O Jehovah, from the hands of the ungodly,	4
preserve me from the violent men,	
who are purposed to overthrow my goings!	
the proud have laid cords for me and snares;	5
they have spread a net by the side of my path,	
they have set traps for me.	

III.

The Psalmist's hope is in Jehovah,

I say to Jehovah, 'Thou art my God,' 6
hear, O Jehovah, the voice of my prayers!
the Lord Jehovah is the strength of my health, 7
a helmet for my head in the day of battle:
let not the ungodly have his desire, O Jehovah! 8
let not their device prosper, lest they get the victory.

IV.

who will requite the wicked for their wickedness,

As for the poison of them that compass me about,— 9
let them be covered with the mischief of their own lips:
let hot burning coals fall upon them, 10
let them be cast into the fire,
and into the pit, that they rise not again.
Slanderers shall not prosper on the earth, 11
evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.

V.

and avenge the cause of the patient and upright.

Sure I am that Jehovah will avenge the poor, 12
and maintain the cause of the helpless!
only the righteous shall give thanks unto Thy name, 13
and the just continue in Thy sight.

§ 41. PSALM CXLI.

IN the violent persecution to which the worshippers of Jehovah were exposed¹, attempts had been made to in-^{1 vv. 7, 8.}duce the Psalmist to join the festivities of the court², pos-^{2 v. 4.}sibly to secure his minstrelsy³. But how could his voice^{3 vv. 3 & 7.} be heard in the palaces of those who had persecuted the righteous, and slain the judges in the land⁴? He feels that^{4 v. 7.} they are laying a trap for him, and prays to Jehovah not to lead him into temptation⁵.^{5 vv. 9—11.}

I.

The Psalmist prayeth to God at eventide,

Jehovah, I call upon Thee, O haste Thee unto me! 1
consider my voice when I cry unto Thee!
let my prayer be set forth in Thy sight as the incense, 2
and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice!

II.

for strength to resist the lures of the wicked,

Set a watch, O Jehovah, before my mouth, 3
and keep the door of my lips!
let not my heart be inclined to any evil thing, 4
let me not be occupied with ungodly works,
and with the men that work wickedness;
and let me not eat of their dainties.

III.

that his voice may not be heard at their festivities;

Let the righteous rather smite me friendly and reprove me,— 5
let not oil anoint mine head!—for my prayer goeth up 6
ever in their calamities!

Their judges are overthrown in stony places; 7
 and shall they hear my words that they are sweet?
 like as when one furroweth up the earth and cleaveth it, 8
 our bones did stick out, we were nigh unto the grave.

IV.

for he trusteth in God for deliverance.

But mine eyes look unto Thee, O Lord Jehovah; 9
 in Thee is my trust; O pour not out my life!
 keep me from the snare that they have laid for me; 10
 and from the traps of the wicked doers!
 let the ungodly fall into their own nets, 11
 but as for me—let me ever escape them!

Ver. 2. Alludes to the daily evening sacrifice at the Temple.

Ver. 5. *reprove me, i. e.* rather would I endure the reproofing counsel of the upright for whom my grateful prayer rises in their affliction, than join in the festivities of the wicked.

oil. Cp. § 25 Ps. xxiii. 5, "Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over." Dan. x. 3, "I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine into my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all." Oil was used by the Jews as by other oriental nations, partly for comfort, partly to give a glossy appearance at festivities to the skin and hair: here it is connected with dainties in ver. 4, and means the oil used in the feasts of the wicked.

Ver. 7. *overthrown, i. e.* either put violently to death by hurling them down the rocks, or else driven out to beg their bread in desolate places.

Ver. 8. *furroweth, i. e.* our bodies are furrowed from starvation, so that our bones are staring and starting through the skin, ready to be flung into the grave. Cp. Job xxxiii. 21:

"His flesh is consumed away that it cannot be seen,
 and his bones, which are not seen, stick out:

Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave and his life to the destroyers."

Ver. 9. Cp. § 69 Ps. xxii. 14.

§ 42. PSALM CXLII.

I.

The Psalmist in sore distress prayeth to Jehovah,

I cry unto Jehovah with my voice, 1
yea, even unto Jehovah do I make my supplication:
I pour out my complaint before Him, 2
and show Him of my trouble;
for my spirit is in heaviness; 3
still *Thou* knowest my path, how in the way wherein I
walk they privily lay a snare for me!

II.

for he hath no other helper:

I look upon my right hand and see, 4
and there is no man that knoweth me:
I have no place to flee unto, 5
and no man careth for my soul.
I cry unto Thee, O Jehovah! 6
I say, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land
of the living.

III.

the righteous regard his deliverance as a token for good.

Consider my complaint, for I am brought very low: 7
O deliver me from my persecutors, 8
for they are too strong for me!
bring my soul out of prison, 9
that I may give thanks unto Thy name;
the righteous wait to see that Thou mayest do me good!

§§ 43—53. PSALMS LV, V, LXIV, LII, XXXVI, LIV, LXI,
LXIII, LVI—LVIII.

THIS group of Psalms written amid the dissensions of the falling kingdom show us the bitterness with which the first thought of possible estrangement from Jerusalem broke upon the Jewish mind. This anticipation, which underlies the earlier¹ of these Psalms, in the later ones² receives its fulfilment; the terrible day of the destruction of the Temple has not yet come, but the Captivity has already commenced; and the Psalmist speaks as if he were one of those earlier exiles who, in the reigns of the later kings, were being dragged in ever-increasing numbers to the court of their Assyrian conquerors.

Divisions and dangers had beset the kingdom, and all who still feared God and obeyed Him were daily exposed to the treachery and calumny of "false tongues³;" in the embittered feelings of such a time, when new and unexpected treachery was being laid bare every day, we need not wonder at the intense imprecations⁴ which were heaped upon the destroyers of order and integrity in the land.

Yet a fervour not unworthy of a prophet breathes through many of these Psalms⁵, and the very severity of the struggle against corruption seems to have brought out into greater clearness the eternity of God's justice and the certainty that the cause of the righteous must in the end prevail. It is

¹ §§ 43, 44,
46 Pss. lv, v,
lii.

² §§ 49, 50
Pss. lxi, lxiii.

³ § 44 Ps. v.
9: § 46 Ps.
lii. 4, 5: § 43
Ps. lv. 11, 22;
§ 52 Ps. lvii.
5: § 50 Ps.
lxiii. 12: § 45
Ps. lxiv. 3, 8.
Cp. Jer.
xxviii. 15.

⁴ Cp. § 44.
Ps. v. 11: § 43
Ps. lv. 16,
24: § 46 Ps.
lii. 6: § 53
Ps. lviii. 9,
10: § 50 Ps.
lxiii. 10, 11.

⁵ § 46 Ps. lii;
§ 5: Ps. lviii;
§ 45 Ps. lxiv.
5—10.

true that the Psalmist expects that end to come at once, and fills up the picture with the details of the destruction of the ungodly; but could we have expected the Jew to learn a lesson, which the world has not yet learnt,—to leave the working out of God's plans to His own time, without arranging His rewards and punishments in the order of human anticipation?

§ 43. PSALM LV.

IN the picture presented in this Psalm of the inhabitants of Jerusalem¹, which was already declining to its fall, ¹ *vv.* 10, 16. we see how far the royal city has sunk from the ideal presented to us by David². In his time no man was to dwell there but he who "spoke the truth from his heart," and ² *Cp.* § 5 *Ps.* xv, 2; § 6 *Ps.* ci, 5, 11. "all wicked doers were to be rooted out from the city of the Lord;" but now the old spirit is well-nigh gone. Pressure from open enemies without³, treachery and strife within⁴, ³ *274.* 12, 13. ⁴ *vv.* 10, 11. have made the hill of Sion an insecure home for the man of God. A prophet of this time⁵ has said of his countrymen, "They all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net;" "a man's enemies are those of his own house;" and in complete agreement with this is the imminent danger⁶ to which the Psalmist is exposed from the sudden treachery of a friend⁷. In the first burst of indignation at this baseness he cries to God for help with ⁵ *Cp.* Micah vii. 1—6. ⁶ *Ch.* vi. and vii. are (according to Ewald) written not by Micah, but by another prophet of the 7th century. ⁷ *v.* 19. ⁷ *vv.* 14, 22.

- ⁸ v. 19. the agony of a man fighting single-handed⁸, though not
⁹ v. 25. without hope, against the enemies of his God⁹.

I.

The Psalmist prayeth for help in danger,

- Hear my prayer, O God, 1
 and hide not Thyself from my petition!
 take heed unto me and hear me, 2
 —I am spent with sighing and cry in my distress—
 the enemy crieth so and the ungodly cometh on so fast, 3
 for they assail me with mischief and are maliciously set
 against me!
 my heart is disquieted within me; 4
 and the fear of death is fallen upon me,
 fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, 5
 and an horrible dread hath overwhelmed me;
 and I said: O that I had wings like a dove, 6
 for then would I fly away and be at rest!
 yea, then would I get me away far off, 7
 and remain in the wilderness!
 then would I haste me to a refuge 8
 from the stormy wind and tempest!

II.

and calleth on God to visit the iniquity of the city and the treachery of a friend,

- Destroy their tongues, O Lord, and cleave them asunder! 9
 for I have spied violence and strife in the city;
 day and night they go about upon her walls, 10
 mischief also and sorrow are within her:

destruction is in the midst of her, 11
 oppression and guile go not out of her streets!
 For it is not an enemy that doth me this dishonour, for then
 I could have borne it, 12
 neither is it my foe that doth magnify himself against me,
 for then I had hid myself from him; 13
 but it is even thou, a man like unto myself, 14
 my companion and mine own familiar friend;
 we took sweet counsel together 15
 and walked to the house of God as friends—
 let death come hastily upon them! let them go down alive
 into the grave! 16
 for wickedness is in their dwellings and among them.

III.

and findeth calm in the thought of God's justice.

As for me, I will call upon God, 17
 and Jehovah will help me;
 evening and morning and at noonday do I groan and cry! 18
 (and so He heareth my voice,
 with His saving help He rescueth my life from the heat of
 the battle, 19
 for there were many against me);
 yea I cry that God may hear, that He who is King of old
 may bring them down, 20
 for they keep not their oath and have no fear of God!
 he laid his hand upon them that were at peace with him, 21
 and he brake his covenant:

the words of his mouth are softer than butter, having war in
his heart, 22
his words are smoother than oil, yet be they very swords!
Cast thy care upon Jehovah, and He will care for thee, 23
He will never suffer the righteous to fall!
and as for them, Thou, O God, wilt bring them into the pit of
destruction; 24
the blood-thirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half
their days, 25
but my trust shall be in Thee!

Ver. 4. *the fear of death.* Cp. § 103 Ps. cxvi. 3.

Ver. 10. *they, i. e.* violence and strife.

Ver. 16. *alive*, like Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Cp. Num. xvi. 23—34.

Ver. 21. *covenant, i. e.* the covenant of friendship.

§ 44. PSALM V.

THIS Psalm, like the 26th, is designed for the service
v. 7. of the Temple¹. The time had not yet come when
the open worshippers of God should be marked out for
actual persecution; but already a zeal for the Temple and
an attendance at its services was recognised as the dis-
tinguishing mark of the professed servant of Jehovah. In
this spirit the Psalmist feels that, as he offers his morning
² v. 3. hymn², he is publicly proclaiming his allegiance to God,
and that hereafter any unworthy act of which he may be
guilty will not only be disgraceful to himself, but will give
³ v. 8. occasion to the watchful enemies³ of God to sneer at the
frailty of His worshipper.

I.

The Psalmist prayeth to be heard,

Give ear unto my words, O Jehovah, 1
consider my meditation!
O hearken Thou unto the voice of my calling, my King and
my God! 2
for unto Thee will I make my prayer.

II.

for it is the privilege of the godly to commune with God,

O Jehovah, in the morning dost Thou hear my voice, 3
early do I wait on Thee and watch;
for Thou art a God that hast no pleasure in wickedness, 4
neither shall the wicked man dwell with Thee;
such as be foolish shall not stand in Thy sight, 5
Thou hatest all them that work iniquity;
Thou shalt destroy them that speak lies; 6
Jehovah abhorreth the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.

III.

and for himself, he is surrounded by the wicked,

But as for me, in the multitude of Thy mercy will I come
into Thine house, 7
and in Thy fear will I worship at Thy holy Temple.
Lead me, O Jehovah, in Thy righteousness, because of them
that lie in wait for me, 8
make Thy way plain before my face!
for there is no faithfulness in their mouth, 9
their inward parts are very wickedness;
their throat is an open sepulchre, 10
they flatter with their tongue.

IV.

whose plots he prayeth may be defeated by God.

Hold them guilty, O God, let them fall away from their
counsels, 11

cast them down in the multitude of their ungodliness,
for they have rebelled against Thee;
and let all them that put their trust in Thee rejoice, 12
let them ever shout for joy, and be Thou their defence;
let them also that love Thy name be joyful in Thee;
for Thou, O Jehovah, dost bless the righteous, 13
and with Thy favour dost compass him as with a shield.

Ver. 3. *watch, i. e.* look out as a watchman.

Ver. 4. He is sure of safety in God's house; for he will meet none of the wicked there.

Ver. 8. Cp. § 24 Ps. xxvii. 13.

Ver. 10. Such is their lying that a man may fall unawares into their wiles, as into an open grave.

§ 45. PSALM LXIV.

¹ As in § 44
Ps. v.
² v. 7.

THE Psalmist utters a prophetic denunciation of the enemies who are secretly¹ plotting against him, and depicts in a bold figure the sudden catastrophe² by which the wicked shall be overthrown and the cause of the righteous shall prevail.

I.

Prayer for help,

Hear my voice; O God, when I cry, 1
preserve my life from fear of the enemy,

hide me from the secret counsels of the wicked, 2
 and from the gathering together of evil-doers,
 who whet their tongue like a sword, 3
 and make ready their arrows, even bitter words,
 that they may privily shoot at him that is perfect, 4
 that they may shoot suddenly and fear not.

II.

for the plots of the wicked are deep:

They encourage themselves in mischief, 5
 they commune among themselves how they may lay snares,
 and say that no man shall see them;
 they devise deeds of iniquity, 6
 even now are they ready with their cunning devices,
 they keep them secret, every man in the deep of his heart;
 but suddenly God shooteth at them with an arrow, 7
 and lo! they are wounded unawares!

III.

but God shall turn their plots against themselves.

They are confounded, yea their own tongues have made them
 fall, 8
 and they that had respect unto them flee away;
 so all men that see it shall be afraid, 9
 and shall say, 'this hath God done,'
 for they perceive that it is His work.
 The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord and put their trust in
 Him, 10
 and all they that are true of heart shall be glad.

Ver. 8. The arrows which they had already aimed [v. 3], are turned against themselves.

§ 46. PSALM LII.

¹ *271. 9, 10.*

AMONG the many enemies of the Psalmist in Jerusalem¹, one has become marked as their leader by his commanding position² and unscrupulous character³; his reckless and confident wickedness brings down on him in this Psalm the stern warning of the Psalmist. In a similar case a prophet would have addressed his enemy by name and in express language predicted his fall; such a sentence did Isaiah⁴, as the messenger of Jehovah, pass on Shebna the treasurer; but a psalmist rather selects the impending fall of his enemy as a particular case to point the general truth, that nothing can shield the wicked from the inevitable justice of God⁵. This train of thought cannot end without a word of comfort for those who, like the Psalmist, have themselves suffered from the violence of their special enemy; for if God be just to punish the evil-doer, He will not fail to reward His followers⁶.

² *71. 1.*³ *21. 5.*⁴ *Isai. xxii. 15—19.*⁵ *21. 2.*⁶ *271. 9, 10.*

I.

The confidence of the wicked;

Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, thou tyrant,	1
whereas the goodness of God endureth yet daily!	2
thy tongue imagineth destruction,	3
like a whetted razor, thou man of guile!	
thou lovest unrighteousness more than goodness,	4
and lying rather than to speak righteousness,	

thou lovest all words that may do hurt, 5
 O thou false tongue!

II.

yet God shall overthrow him,

So may God likewise destroy thee for ever, 6
 take thee and pluck thee out of thy dwelling,
 and root thee out of the land of the living :
 the righteous shall see this and fear, 7
 and shall laugh him to scorn ;
 'lo, this is the man, that took not God for his strength, 8
 'but trusted unto the multitude of his riches,
 'and was proud in his own frowardness'

III.

while the godly shall continue for ever.

As for me, I am like a green olive-tree in the house of God, 9
 my trust is in the tender mercy of God for ever and ever !
 I will always give thanks unto Thee for that Thou hast done, 10
 and I will wait on Thy name, for it is lovely,
 in the presence of all Thy saints.

Ver. 3. *razor*. Cp. § 40 cxi. 3 ; § 45 lxiv. 3 ; § 52 lvii. 5 ; § 54 lix. 7.

Ver. 9. In contrast to the ungodly, the Psalmist will flourish, like the olive-trees which grew in the precincts of the Temple. Cp. § 105 Ps. xcii. 11—13.

§ 47. PSALM XXXVI.

THE Psalmist expresses with great depth of feeling his desire to be spared the forced separation from the Temple, which though not yet come¹, he sees to be imminent².

¹ ver. 7, 8.

² v. 11.

I.

The ungodly rejoices in his own misdeeds:

The voice of evil is deep in the heart of the ungodly, 1
 there is no fear of God before his eyes;
 for it flattereth him in his own sight, 2
 to devise wickedness and to follow hate;
 the words of his mouth are mischief and deceit, 3
 he hath left off to behave himself wisely, and to do good;
 he imagineth mischief upon his bed, 4
 and hath set himself in no good way, neither doth he
 abhor anything that is evil!

II.

but God is just, who will protect his own,

O Jehovah, Thy mercy reacheth unto the heavens, 5
 and Thy faithfulness unto the clouds!
 Thy righteousness standeth like the mountains of God, 6
 Thy judgments are like the great deep;
 Thou, O Jehovah, shalt save both man and beast! 7
 How excellent is Thy mercy, O God!
 and the children of men shall flee under the shadow of
 Thy wings;

they shall be satisfied with the plenteousness of Thy house, 8
and Thou shalt give them drink of Thy pleasures, as out
of a river.

III.

and overthrow the wicked.

For with Thee is the well of life, 9
and in Thy light shall we see light!
O continue forth Thy lovingkindness unto them that know
Thee, 10
and Thy righteousness to them that are true of heart;
O let not the foot of pride come against me, 11
and let not the hand of the ungodly drive me away!
There are they fallen, all that work wickedness, 12
they are cast down, and shall not be able to stand!

Ver. 1. Here is described the consummation of evil in those who have given themselves over to evil-doing. The voice of conscience to the good, the ever-present counsellor and oracle of good, is not only hushed, but, as in the case of Balaam, becomes a voice ever inciting to sin, the very counsellor and oracle of evil, and makes the heart a temple, not of the Spirit of God, but of Satan.

Ver. 11. *drive me away*, i. e. from the Temple mentioned in ver. 8.

§ 48. PSALM LIV.

A PRAYER, in time of oppression from heathen nations¹, that God would manifest Himself according to ¹ *vv.* 2, 3.
His name and might of old.

I.

Prayer for help against the heathen.

Save me, O God, for Thy name's sake,	1
and avenge me by Thy strength!	
hear my prayer, O God,	2
and hearken unto the words of my mouth:	
for strangers are risen up against me,	3
and tyrants seek after my soul,	
which have not God before their eyes.	

II.

Triumph of faith.

Behold, God is my helper,	4
the Lord is with them that uphold my soul:	
He shall reward evil unto mine enemies;	5
destroy Thou them in Thy truth!	
I will sacrifice unto Thee with a free heart;	6
I will praise Thy name, O Jehovah, for it is good;	
for it hath delivered me from all my troubles,	7
and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.	

Ver. 1. Cp. § 22 Ps. xxi. "The name of the God of Jacob defend thee."

Is. iv. 10, "Let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God."

God's name is not merely His appellation which we speak with our mouths, but also and principally the idea we attach to it—His Being, so far as it is confessed revealed and known.

Ver. 6. *it, i. e.* the name of God.

§ 49. PSALM LXI.

IN this Psalm we have a prayer from an exile¹, for deliverance from misery and for restitution to that Temple, in which he had so often found rest and peace². The king, ² *vv.* 3, 4. whose preservation is the subject of the final prayer, must have been one of those, who like Josiah, supported the adherents of Jehovah against the idolatrous faction.

I.

The Psalmist prayeth to God from a distant land,

Hear my crying, O God,	I
give ear unto my prayer!	
from the ends of the earth do I call upon Thee,	2
when my heart is faint:	
'Thou wilt lead me upon the rock which is too high for me.	3

II.

and longeth for the Temple,

Thou wast ever a refuge for me,	
and a strong tower against the enemy;	
O that I might dwell in Thy tabernacle for ever,	4
and flee unto the covert of Thy wings!	
for 'Thou, O God, didst hear my vows,	5
and gavest me the heritage of them that fear Thy name!	

III.

and for the safety of the king.

Thou wilt grant the king a long life,	6
and make his years as many generations;	

may he reign before God for ever; 7
 prepare Thy loving-kindness and truth that they may pre-
 serve him.
 So will I sing praises unto Thy name for ever, 8
 that I may daily perform my vows.

Ver. 5. *the heritage, i. e.* to dwell in the Holy Land.

Ver. 7. *before God, i. e.* not sink into the grave. § 51 Ps. lvi. 13, "to walk before God in the light of the living." But the phrase also means 'in the favour of God.'

This prayer for the king's life may be compared with § 50 Ps. lxiii. 12.

§ 50. PSALM LXIII.

12. 1.

ALAMENTATION in a foreign land¹, from an exile longing to return to the Temple. It is the Psalmist's consolation to recall the happiness and splendour of its services. The Psalm closes with a prayer for the king, with whose well-being the existence of the nation and Temple is bound up.

I.

The Psalmist in exile longeth to return to the Temple,

O God, Thou art my God, early do I seek Thee; 1
 my soul thirsteth for Thee,
 my flesh also longeth after Thee, 2
 in a barren and dry land where no water is.
 Thus have I seen Thee in the sanctuary, 3
 and beheld Thy power and glory;
 for 'Thy loving-kindness is better than the life itself,' 4
 so did my lips sing in Thy praise.

Thus will I magnify Thee while I live, 5
 and lift up my hands in Thy name:
 my soul is satisfied as it were with marrow and fatness, 6
 and my mouth praiseth Thee with joyful lips,
 when I remember Thee upon my bed, 7
 and think upon Thee in the night-watches!

II.

for God hath been his deliverer.

Thou verily wast my helper, 8
 and under the shadow of Thy wings do I rejoice;
 my soul did hang upon Thee, 9
 and Thy right hand did hold me fast.
 As for them—they seek my soul to destroy it— 10
 let them sink into the depths of the earth!
 let them be given over to the edge of the sword, 11
 let them be a portion for jackals!

III.

Prayer for the prosperity of the king.

But may the king rejoice in God! 12
 let every one that sweareth by him glory,
 but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped!

Ver. 3. *Thus, i. e.* as my God. So also in ver. 5.

Ver. 12. For the custom of swearing by the king's name, see Gen xlii. 15, 2 Sam. xi. 11. Such an oath was regarded as a proof of loyalty. The prayer here is for the triumph of the loyal over the disaffected, who may during the exile have taken the oath of allegiance to a foreign king by swearing by his name.

§ 51. PSALM LVI.

WE gather from this and the next Psalm that the Psalmist is now a captive in a heathen land, where his firm adherence to the worship of his country and his undisguised confidence in deliverance by the hand of Jehovah, had exposed him to the suspicions and persecution of his enemies. This however serves only to deepen his sense of the watchful protection of Jehovah¹ and to arouse within him the spirit of prophecy. He foresees the day when Jehovah will overthrow the tyranny of the heathen² and establish over the earth the kingdom and religion of Israel³.

¹ v. 8, § 52
Ps. lvii. 11.

² v. 7.

³ Cp. notes
§ 37 Ps.
lxxvi. and
§ 63 Ps. lxxii.

I.

In the midst of persecution

Be merciful unto me, O God! for man goeth about to devour
me; 1
they are daily fighting and troubling me;
mine enemies would daily swallow me up, 2
for they be many which disdainfully fight against me.
What time I am afraid, 3
in Thee do I put my trust:
through God do I praise His word, 4
yea, in God do I put my trust and fear not;
what shall flesh do unto me?

II.

the Psalmist trusteth in the providence of God;

They daily wrest my words, 5
all that they imagine is to do me evil:

they stir up strife and lie in wait, they mark my steps, 6
 as though they longed for my life.
 Recompense them according to their wickedness, 7
 in Thy displeasure cast down the peoples, O God!
 Thou countest my sighings, 8
 Thou puttest my tears in Thy bottle—
 yea, they are noted in Thy book!

III.

who will deliver him in the time of trouble.

What time I call upon Thee, then shall mine enemies be put
 to flight! 9
 This I know, God is on my side!
 through God do I praise His word, 10
 through Jehovah do I praise His word:
 yea, in God do I put my trust and fear not; 11
 what shall flesh do unto me?
 unto Thee, O God, do I owe my vows: 12
 unto Thee will I give thanks,
 for Thou hast delivered my life from death, 13
 and my feet from falling,
 that I may walk before God in the land of the living.

Ver. 4. Cp. § 88 Ps. cxxx. 5.

Ver. 5. *worst*, i. e. they so report and misrepresent his prophetic utterances as to arouse the hostility of the people and expose him to strife. Then they lie in wait for an outburst of popular feeling, or watch for an opportunity of removing him by stealth (ver. 6).

Ver. 7. *the peoples*, i. e. not only my enemies, but the enemies of God everywhere. He invokes the judgment generally expected before the coming of the Messiah. Cp. note on expectations of a Messiah, § 63 Ps. lxxii.

§ 52. PSALM LVII.

THE afflictions of captivity and the confidence of the Psalmist in God, which form the subject of the 56th Psalm, appear here in a form adapted for public use. The hopes of restoration, which form the burthen at the end of each division of the Psalm, must have been the only earthly consolation left to the Israelites at this time, and it would naturally occur to the Psalmist to express them in a poem suited to the wants of his fellow-countrymen in captivity.

I.

Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me, 1
for my soul fleeth unto Thee for refuge,
yea, under the shadow of Thy wings shall be my refuge, 2
until this peril be overpast!
I will call unto the most high God,
even to God who doeth good unto me, 3
that He send from heaven and save me,
and put him to shame that would eat me up, 4
yea, that God send forth His mercy and truth!
my soul is among lions, I lie even among ravening men, 5
with the children of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows,
and their tongue a sharp sword.
Set up Thyself, O God, above the heavens, 6
and Thy glory above all the earth !

II.

They have laid a net for my feet, 7
and their own soul is bowed down towards the same ;

they have digged a pit before me :

—and are fallen into the midst of it themselves.

Mine heart is fixed, O God, mine heart is fixed, 8

I will sing and give praise !

awake up, my glory, awake lute and harp ! 9

I myself will awake right early !

I will give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, among the people, 10

and I will sing unto Thee among the nations :

for the greatness of 'Thy mercy reacheth unto the heavens, 11

and Thy truth unto the clouds !

Set up Thyself, O God, above the heavens, 12

and Thy glory above all the earth !

Ver. 7. A repetition of the metaphor of lions, ver. 5. *is bowed down towards, i. e.* is in danger of being caught in it.

Ver. 8. For the metaphor, cp. § 2 vii. 16, § 61 ix. 15, 16, § 70 xxxv. 8.

Ver. 9. *my glory, i. e.* my soul, the noblest part of my being. Cp. 'honour' § 2 Ps. vii. 5.

§ 53. PSALM LVIII.

AMONG Eastern nations judges were regarded as the representatives of heaven, and justice was of so sacred a character that the title 'gods'¹ was frequently given to the administrators of it. With corrupt men, however, and in a degraded age, the sanctity of the office of judge served only as a cloak for iniquity and extortion, and we can readily believe that the Israelites in their captivity had little chance of obtaining redress by an appeal to the tribunals of their oppressors. The 58th Psalm is a bitter and indignant outcry against judicial corruption. The Psalmist

¹ Cp. Ex. xxii. 8; Judges v. 8. § 83 Ps. lxxxii. 6; John x. 34, 35.

- ² *v.* 1. begins by tauntingly inquiring² if the judges really deserve the title of 'gods' which they arrogate to themselves, and then, as though they were silenced by his reproof, he indignantly denounces³ them as the corrupt offspring of a corrupt age, incapable alike by nature and habit of listening to the promptings of a higher life. Then with that deep faith in the ultimate triumph of God's cause over all oppression and wrong which characterized the Hebrews, he proclaims the day⁴ when the whole company of iniquitous judges shall be rooted out, and justice be firmly established on the earth⁵.

⁵ Cp. notes
§ 37 Ps. lxxvi.
and § 63
Ps. lxxii.

I.

The Psalmist in mockery contrasteth the titles of the judges with their works,

Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O ye gods, 1
and judge uprightly the sons of men,
while still ye imagine mischief in your heart, 2
and weigh out the wickedness of your hands upon the earth?

II.

depicteth their real character,

The wicked are estranged even from their mother's womb, 3
as soon as they are born, they go astray and speak lies!
they are as venomous as the poison of a serpent, 4
even like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ears,
which refuseth to hear the voice of the charmer, 5
charm he never so wisely!

III.

and calleth on God to destroy them:

Break their teeth, O God, in their mouths,
 smite the jawbones of the lions, O Jehovah!
 When they shoot out their arrows, let them be blunted, 6
 let them fall away like water that runneth apace,
 let them consume away like wax that melteth, 7
 like the untimely fruit of a woman, which seeth not the sun!

IV.

he foreseeth their sudden overthrow and the triumph of the righteous.

Or ever your thorns perceive it, 8
 He will consume the thicket, both green and dry,
 the righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance, 9
 he shall wash his footsteps in the blood of the ungodly:
 so that a man shall say, 'Verily there is a reward for the righteous, 10
 'verily there be gods that judge in the earth!'

Ver. 3. *estranged*, *i. e.* from God and holiness.

Ver. 4. As some dangerous serpents in the East could not be tamed by the arts of the serpent charmer, so do the ungodly shut their ears to the voice of conscience and admonitions to a holier life.

Ver. 8. The unrighteous judges are likened to thorns: before any of them perceive that destruction is coming, God shall destroy *the thicket*, *i. e.* the entire company of them. Cp. § 20 vv. 6, 7, where the wicked are called 'abominable thorns.'

§ 54. PSALM LIX.

A KING is here represented as beleaguered in Jerusalem by a savage foe. In his cry for help his mind is filled with the thought of the old deliverance¹ of the Holy City from the Assyrians, to which allusion was so frequently made in later² writers. The invaders were evidently fierce nomad barbarians, who went out by day to plunder and returned to watch by night. Their return in the evening, so terrible at first, fades into insignificance in the Psalmist's mind, when he thinks of the mighty protection of Jehovah; nay, his language passes into fierce scorn, when he pictures them howling like³ dogs around the walls in their eagerness to enter in and rend their prey. He implores God not to slay them far away, but to let them come on violently to their own destruction in sight of all the city.

No invasion of the kingdom of Judea presents any picture like this, except the great invasion of the Scythians. It was the earliest of that long series of movements of wandering hordes, which from that time till the time of Attila has periodically burst like a flood over the great mountain barrier of northern barbarism to devastate the plains of civilization below. No mention is made of this invasion in the historical books of Kings and Chronicles; but the simple facts of the invasion, the penetration of these vast masses to the southern frontier of Palestine,

¹ §§ 35, 36
Pss. xlvii,
xlviii.

² Zech. xiv,
Jer. xxvi. 18,
19, Rev. xx.
9.

³ Cp. note on
v. 6.

their retirement after being bought off by Psammetichus and sacking the temple of Astarte at Ascalon, the permanent trace of their inroad in the name of Scythopolis, 'city of the Scythians,' which was given to the old Canaanitish city of Bethshan on the plain of Esdraelon, are preserved to us in other historical⁴ records; while we gather from more than one passage of the prophets⁵ who lived in that time a general picture of the terror caused by these strange marauders.

⁴ Herod. i. 105; Judith iii. 10; 2 Macc. xii. 29.
⁵ Jer. iv—vi, especially iv. 25—29.

This scething⁶ host of horsemen and bowmen, surging⁶ to and fro with its countless bands like the waves of an angry sea, appeared in Palestine in the reign of Josiah. The vivid description in the Psalm of their appearance before Jerusalem, 'grinning like dogs and running about the city,' leads us to the supposition that it was written by an eyewitness, while the tone of authority⁷ assumed by the writer would seem to point to no other than to the king himself, as the author of the Psalm.

⁶ Jer. i. 13.

I.

Cry to God for help against the wickedness of the invader;

Deliver me from mine enemies, O God!	1
defend me from them that rise up against me;	
O deliver me from the wicked doers,	2
and save me from the bloodthirsty men!	
for lo, they lie in wait for my life,	3
violent men conspire against me—	
without any offence or fault of me, O Jehovah!	

they run and prepare themselves without my fault : 4
arise Thou therefore to help me and behold !
Stand up, Jehovah God of Hosts, Thou God of Israel, 5
stand up and visit all the heathen,
and be not merciful unto treacherous men and robbers !

II.

The Psalmist pictureth forth the threatening danger, and the majesty and mercy of God :

They shall come back in the evening, 6
howl like a dog and run about the city !
behold they will boast aloud with their mouth, 7
swords are in their lips,
for, say they, 'who doth hear?'
But Thou, Jehovah, shalt have them in derision, 8
Thou shalt laugh all the heathen to scorn !
upon Thee, O my strength, will I wait ! 9
for Thou art the God of my refuge :
my God will show me His kindness plenteously, 10
God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies !

III.

he prayeth Him to let the enemy come back, that they may be slain before the city, so that all the people may see it.

Slay them not, lest my people forget it, 11
drive them on through Thy might and cast them down,
O Lord our defence !
for the sin of their mouth and for the words of their lips,— 12
O let them be taken in their pride !
and why? their speaking is of cursing and lies !

consume them in Thy wrath, consume them that they may
perish, 13
that men may know that it is God that ruleth in Jacob
and unto the ends of the world!
And let them return in the evening, 14
howl like a dog and go around the city!
they will rush violently for their meat, 15
yea verily they shall be satisfied and fall!

IV.

Praise of God for the same.

As for me, I will sing of Thy power, 16
and will praise Thy mercy every morning,
for Thou hast been my defence
and refuge in the day of my trouble;
unto Thee, O my strength, will I sing, 17
for Thou, O God, art my refuge and my merciful God!

Ver. 6. *a dog.* A writer of the western world, to convey the same idea, would write wolves or hyænas. The dogs of the East, the wild dogs of Jezreel who devoured Jezebel, were savage and hungry animals, wandering about the fields and streets of cities, devouring dead bodies and other offal, and hence the objects of general abhorrence. Cp. 1 Kings xiv. 11, 2 Kings ix. 36.

§ 55. PSALM XXVI.

THIS is a Psalm, composed apparently for the Temple service on some special occasion of a general visitation, possibly some plague or sickness.

Such a visitation was regarded by the universal feeling of antiquity as a punishment for national sin. Amid the panic and despair of the multitude the faithful few were sustained by a sense of their relation to God. The maintenance of this relation had brought this party into close union, the symbol of which was a rigid observance of the Temple services, and we already feel both in this and in the 5th Psalm¹, also composed for the Temple service, the commencing separation between this party and that of the frivolous multitude. This separation, slight at first, widened afterwards into absolute estrangement; and while those who at first had only neglected the Temple came afterwards to actual persecution of the regular worshippers, these in their turn maintained a distant attitude towards their opponents, which led to the greatest bitterness of feeling. The Psalm itself is indeed free from all expression of that spiritual pride which is the especial temptation of religious exclusiveness, but it indicates clearly that the separation had begun.

It is the prayer of a man who in the consciousness of his own innocence and love of God prays that he may

¹ § 44.

escape the scourge, which was falling so heavily on the wicked.

I.

The Psalmist attesteth the purity of his life,

Be Thou my judge, O Jehovah! 1
 for I have walked innocently,
 my trust hath been also in Jehovah without wavering!

II.

Examine me, O Jehovah, and prove me, 2
 try out my reins and my heart!
 for Thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes 3
 and I will walk in Thy truth;
 I have not dwelt with vain persons, 4
 neither will I have fellowship with the deceitful.

III.

I hate the congregation of the wicked, 5
 and will not sit among the ungodly;
 I wash mine hands in innocency, 6
 that so I may go about 'Thine altar, O Jehovah,
 that I may sing aloud with the voice of thanksgiving, 7
 and tell of all Thy wondrous works!

IV.

he claimeth deliverance from the visitation,

O Jehovah! I love the habitation of Thy house, 8
 and the place where Thy glory dwelleth;
 sweep not away my soul with sinners, 9
 nor my life with the blood-thirsty,

in whose hands is abominable wickedness 10
and their right hand is full of bribes!

V.

and abideth in hope.

But as for me—I will walk innocently; 11
O deliver me and be merciful unto me!
my foot standeth in an even place; 12
I praise Jehovah in the congregation.

Ver. 6. According to the Hebrew custom, by which the man who offered sacrifice went about the altar singing and giving thanks during the service. Cp. ver. 12.

§ 56. PSALM XXVIII.

THIS Psalm, composed probably by a king, is similar
in tone and language to the preceding, but was
written under circumstances of still more urgent danger¹.

¹ v. 9.

I.

The Psalmist prayeth to God for deliverance

Unto Thee, O Jehovah, will I cry, 1
my Rock, be not Thou silent to me,
lest, if Thou be silent, I become like them that go down to
the grave:
hear the voice of my humble petitions when I cry unto Thee, 2
when I hold up my hand towards the mercy-seat of Thy
holy Temple!

II.

Draw me not away with the ungodly and wicked doers, 3
 which speak friendly to their neighbours but imagine mischief in their hearts!
 reward them after their desert and the wickedness of their deeds, 4
 recompense them after the work of their hands, 5
 pay them that they have deserved!

III.

from the common destruction of the wicked.

For they regard not the works of Jehovah, 6
 nor the operation of His hands,
 therefore let Him break them down and not build them up!

He rejoiceth in faith and prayeth for the people.

Praised be Jehovah, 7
 for He hath heard the voice of my humble petitions!
 Jehovah is my strength and my shield, 8
 my heart hath trusted in Him and I am helped;
 therefore my heart danceth for joy and in my song will I
 praise Him!
 O Jehovah, who art their strength 9
 and the saving defence of Thine anointed,
 O save Thy people and give Thy blessing unto Thine inheritance, 10
 feed them and set them up for ever!

Ver. 2. *hold up*, i. e. in prayer, from the place built for the king (2 Chron. vi. 13) in the Temple, a kind of covered throne (2 Kings xvi. 18) attached to a pillar (2 Kings xi. 14 and xxiii. 3), from which on Sabbath days he surveyed and could address the congregation; it was thence called the Sabbath-throne, the 'covert for the Sabbath,' as distinguished from the other throne from which he gave judgment.

Ver. 9. *their*, i. e. of Thy people.

§ 57. PSALM XXXI.

MANY single expressions, as well as the whole character of quiet resignation, expressed in the tender and plaintive manner peculiar to Jeremiah, point to that Prophet as the author of this psalm. The Psalmist speaks of himself as persecuted¹ for his fidelity to Jehovah; the first half of the 15th verse occurs in Jeremiah xx. 10; the figure of the broken² vessel in Jeremiah xxii. 28; xlviii. 38.

¹ 27. 20, 22. The latter³ portion of the Psalm appears to have been added, when the affliction described in the former⁴ portion was past and the prayer for deliverance had been answered.

I.

Perfect resignation to the will of God.

In Thee, O Jehovah, have I put my trust; let me not be put
to confusion for ever; 1
deliver me in Thy righteousness:
bow down Thine ear to me, make haste to deliver me, 2
and be Thou my strong rock 3
and a house of defence to save me!
for Thou art my strong rock and my castle; 4
Thou wilt also be my guide and lead me for Thy name's
sake,
Thou wilt draw me out of the net that they have laid privily
for me, 5
for Thou art my stronghold.

Into Thy hands I commend my spirit; 6
 for Thou hast redeemed me, Jehovah, Thou God of truth!
 Thou hatest them that hold to lying vanities, 7
 but as for me, my trust is in Jehovah.

II.

Outpouring of sorrow and suffering.

Let me be glad and rejoice in Thy mercy, 8
 for Thou hast considered my trouble,
 and hast known my soul in adversities;
 Thou hast not delivered me into the hand of the enemy, 9
 but hast set my foot in a large room!
 Have mercy upon me, O Jehovah! for I am in trouble, 10
 and mine eye is consumed for very heaviness, yea, my soul
 and my body.
 For my life is waxen old with heaviness and my years with
 mourning; 11
 my strength faileth me because of mine infirmity and my
 bones are consumed by reason of my oppressors, 12
 I became a reproach even to my neighbours and they of mine
 acquaintance were afraid of me, 13
 and they that see me without convey themselves from me;
 I am clean forgotten as a dead man out of mind, 14
 I am become like a broken vessel.

III.

Return to prayer and confidence.

I have heard the slander of the multitude; fear is on every
 side; 15
 while they conspired together against me,
 and took their counsel to take away my life.

But as for me—my hope hath been in Thee, O Jehovah, 16
I have said, Thou art my God!
my time is in Thy hand, 17
deliver me from the hand of mine enemies and from them
which persecute me :
shew Thy servant the light of Thy countenance, 18
and save me for Thy mercies' sake !
let me not be confounded, O Jehovah, for I call upon Thee ! 19
let the ungodly be put to confusion and be put to silence
in the grave !
let the lying lips be put to silence, 20
which cruelly disdainfully and despitefully speak against the
righteous !

I.

Thanksgiving and praise.

O how plentiful is Thy goodness which Thou hast laid up for
them that fear Thee, 21
and that Thou hast prepared for them that put their trust
in Thee,
even before the sons of men ;
Thou hidest them in the shelter of Thy presence from the noise
of men, 22
and keepest them in a covered place from the strife of
tongues !
Blessed be Jehovah, for He hath shewed me His marvellous
great kindness 23
in the time of oppression and need !

II.

As for me, I said in my trouble, "I am cut off from the sight
of Thine eyes;" 24
nevertheless Thou heardest the voice of my prayer, when
I cried unto Thee. 25
O love Jehovah, all ye His saints! 26
Jehovah preserveth them that are faithful,
and plenteously rewardeth the proud doer:
be strong and He shall establish your heart, 27
all ye that put your trust in Jehovah!

Ver. 7. *lying vanities*, i. e. gods, which are no gods. Cp. Deut. xxxii. 21,
Jer. viii. 19.

Ver. 9. *large room*. Cp. § 12 Ps. xviii. 19; § 55 Ps. xxvi. 12.

§ 58. PSALM LXXXVIII.

THIS Psalm was written in sickness and suffering,
while the Psalmist was still¹ young. He is deserted ¹ 2. 15.
by his friends, and, as it were, dead and out of God's² ² Cp. Job xii.
sight. To him there is nothing beyond the grave: as he ^{10.}
dwells upon his sufferings, the gloom becomes ever more
intense: it is unbroken by any ray of hope, such we
usually find even in the most desponding³ Psalms, from ³ Cp. § 26 Ps.
the triumph of good, personal deliverance, or even the ^{vi.}
overthrow of present oppressors.

I.

The Psalmist's prayer.

O Jehovah, God of my salvation, I
I have cried day and night before Thee;

O let my prayer enter into Thy presence,
incline Thine ear unto my calling!

II.

His great sufferings;

For my soul is full of trouble, 2
and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.
I am counted as one of them that go down into the pit, 3
and I am become even as a man that hath no strength;
my place is among the dead, 4
like unto them that are slain and lie in the grave,
who are out of Thy remembrance,
and are cut away from Thy hand.
Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, 5
in a place of darkness and in the deep;
Thine indignation lieth hard upon me, 6
and Thou hast vexed me with all Thy storms.

III.

in his trouble he prayeth,

Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me, 7
and made me to be abhorred of them,
I am so fast shut in that I cannot get forth. 8
My sight faileth me for very trouble; 9
O Jehovah, I call daily upon Thee,
I stretch forth my hands unto Thee;
“dost Thou shew wonders among the dead? 10
or shall the dead rise up again and praise Thee?
Shall Thy loving-kindness be shewed in the grave? 11
or Thy faithfulness in destruction?

Shall Thy wondrous works be known in the dark? 12
and Thy righteousness in the land where all things are
forgotten?"

IV.

but cannot attain to comfort.

But as for me—to Thee, Jehovah, do I cry, 13
and early shall my prayer come before Thee.
O Jehovah, why abhorrest Thou my soul, 14
and hidest Thou Thy face from me?
I am in misery and my youth faileth me, 15
Thy terrors do I suffer, a horrible dread overwhelmeth me;
Thy wrathful displeasure is gone over me: 16
Thy terrible things have utterly undone me,
they came round about me daily like the waterfloods, 17
and compassed me together on every side!
My lovers and friends hast Thou put away from me, 18
mine acquaintance are—they that dwell in the grave!

Ver. 7. Cp. Job xix. 13.

Ver. 8. *shut in*, i.e. not in prison, but in his own abandonment and misery; cp. Lamen. iii. 7, "He hath hedged me about that I cannot get out: he hath made my chain heavy." And Job iii. 23, xix. 8.

Ver. 10—12. The words of his prayer.

Ver. 18. Cp. Job xvii. 13, 14.

§ 59. PSALM L.

THE reforms of Josiah had succeeded in establishing the outward worship of Jehovah throughout the nation, but the old evils of idolatry and indifference had been soon followed by those of formalism and hypocrisy.

This was the natural consequence of the establishment of the Book of the Law as a fundamental part of the constitution. Whatever place it may have held among the Jews heretofore, there is no doubt that the finding of the Book of the Law in the Temple gave rise to a great increase in the study of its text. A whole system of law commentaries were framed to elucidate its meaning; wisdom was sought in the knowledge of its letter, and mis-

¹ Jer. viii. 8. taken zeal had turned the 'law¹' into an object of superstitious reverence and had attached a magical influence

² Jer. vii. 3. to the mere name of the Temple of the Lord².

In a magnificent vision the Prophet, to whom this Psalm is due, beholds the Almighty in the very centre of this misguided worship denouncing a solemn judgment against the degradation of His name and setting forth the requirements of a spiritual religion.

The Psalmist describeth his vision of judgment.

Jehovah, even the most mighty God, hath spoken and called
the world 1

from the rising up of the sun unto the going down thereof.

Out of Sion, the perfection of beauty, 2

God hath shined;—

our God shall come and shall not keep silence! 3

there went before Him a consuming fire

and a mighty tempest was stirred up round about Him.

He calleth to the heaven above 4

and to the earth, that He will judge His people;

“gather my saints together unto Me, 5
those that have made a covenant with Me with sacrifice!”
and the heavens declared His judgment, 6
that God Himself doth judge :

I.

The words of God's sentence against the whole nation ;

“Hear, O my people, and I will speak, I myself will testify
against thee, O Israel ;— 7

I am God, even thy God !

I will not reprove thee, because of thy sacrifices, 8
for thy burnt-offerings are always before Me ;

I will take no bullock out of thine house, 9
nor he-goat out of thy folds !

For all the beasts of the forest are Mine, 10
and so are the cattle upon a thousand hills,

I know all the fowls upon the mountains, 11
and the wild beasts of the field are in My sight ;

if I were hungry, I would not tell thee ; 12
for the whole world is Mine and all that is therein !

Thinkest thou that I will eat bulls' flesh ? 13
and drink the blood of goats ?

offer unto God thanksgiving 14
and pay thy vows unto the Most Highest

and call upon Me in the time of trouble, 15
so will I hear thee and thou shalt praise Me !”

II.

against the wicked;

But unto the ungodly said God: 16
 "why dost thou preach My laws,
 and takest My covenant in thy mouth,
 whereas thou hatest to be reformed 17
 and hast cast My words behind thee?
 when thou sawest a thief, thou consentedst unto him, 18
 and hast been partaker with the adulterers,
 thou hast let thy mouth speak wickedness, 19
 and with thy tongue thou hast set forth deceit,
 thou sittest and speakest against thy brother, 20
 yea and slanderest thine own mother's son.
 These things hast thou done—and I held My tongue; 21
 and thou thoughtest that I am even such an one as thyself:
 but I will reprove thee and set before thee the things that
 thou hast done."

III.

He endeth with words of mercy and solemn warning.

"O consider this, ye that forget God, 22
 lest I pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you!
 whoso offereth Me thanks and praise, he honoureth Me; 23
 and to him that ordereth his conversation aright,
 will I shew the salvation of God!"

Ver. 2. Cp. Lam. ii. 15, of Jerusalem. "Is this the city that men call the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth?" Cp. § 36 Ps. xlviii. 2.

§ 60. PSALM I.

THIS Psalm strikes the keynote, as it were of the whole Psalter, the faithfulness of God's dealings with man, and hence the indissoluble connexion between righteousness¹ and blessing. It is this general character which has given it its place at the beginning of the Book of Psalms in the authorised version.

¹ Cp. § 4
Ps. xxiv. 7. 5,
note.

Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the
ungodly 1
nor stood in the way of sinners,
and hath not sat in the seat of the scornful;
but his delight is in the law of Jehovah, 2
and in His law will he meditate day and night:
he shall be like a tree planted by the water-side, 3
that will bring forth his fruit in due season, his leaf also
doth not wither: 4
and look, whatsoever he doeth, it shall prosper.
As for the ungodly, it is not so with them, 5
but they are like the chaff which the wind scattereth.
Therefore the ungodly shall not be able to stand in the judgment, 6
neither the sinners in the congregation of the righteous:
for Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous, 7
but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Ver. 6. *stand in the judgment* is a legal term, meaning to maintain their cause in the trial.

§§ 61, 62. PSALMS IX, X, XXXVII.

THESE Psalms form a group, the oldest on the acrostic or alphabetical arrangement. For a more detailed account of this arrangement and its effect upon lyric poetry, the reader is referred to the introductory observations to § 130 Psalm CXIX.

§ 61. PSALMS IX, X,

were probably composed for the Temple service, to be sung in alternate strophes in the name of the people, as a thanksgiving for some signal proof of Divine vengeance on one of the great Empires of the world. As Jerusalem was still¹ undestroyed, the allusion is probably to the Assyrian Empire, which finally perished with the destruction of Nineveh, A.C. 606; and the cities mentioned in the ²Psalm would, on this hypothesis, be the cities of which Nineveh was composed. The wish expressed towards the end ³ of the Psalm, that the heathen may be driven out from the land, is rendered intelligible by the partial subjugation of Judæa by the Egyptians which happened at this time; and the prevalent tone of frivolity in the nation, so constantly alluded to in the contemporary Prophets, is here strikingly depicted by the quotation of an older Psalm⁴. Great emphasis is given to this part of the subject by this interruption of the alphabetical arrangement and by its⁵ resumption when the picture is complete.

It is this interruption which has probably led to the separation of the Psalm into two parts and it may be ascribed to the fact that the Psalmist, while dwelling upon the frivolity of the nation, found the ideas he wished to express already embodied in an older Psalm and omitted so many of the initial letters as would allow for the insertion of these verses. The original arrangement as one psalm has been preserved in Septuagint.

I. [Ps. IX. A.V.]

Thanksgiving for a great deliverance and a revelation of the divine mercy.

- A**ll my heart shall praise Thee, O Jehovah, 1
 I will speak of all Thy marvellous works,
 I will be glad and rejoice in Thee, 2
 yea, my songs will I make of Thy name, O Thou most
 Highest !
- B**ecause mine enemies are driven back, 3
 and fall and perish at Thy presence ;
 for Thou hast maintained my right and my cause, 4
 Thou art set on the throne that judgest right !
- C**onfounded are the heathen and the ungodly are destroyed, 5
 Thou hast put out their name for ever and ever ;
 as for the enemy,—he is laid waste in perpetual ruin, 6
 yea, and the cities Thou hast destroyed—their memorial
 is perished with them :
- but Jehovah reigneth a King for ever, 7
 He hath also prepared His seat for judgment ;
 and He will judge the world in righteousness 8
 and minister true judgment unto the people ;

Great defence shall Jehovah be to the oppressed, 9
even a refuge in time of drought and trouble,
and they that know Thy name shall put their trust in Thee, 10
for Thou, Jehovah, hast never failed them that seek Thee!

II.

Prayer for Jehovah's help against internal troubles;

High praise to Jehovah who dwelleth in Sion, 11
shew the people of His doings;
for He that maketh inquisition for blood hath remembered
them, 12
and hath not forgotten the complaint of the poor:
In mercy, O Jehovah, consider my trouble from them that
hate me, 13
Thou that liftedst me up from the gates of death,
that I may shew forth all Thy praise; 14
within the gates of the daughter of Sion I will rejoice at
Thy salvation!
Justly are the heathen sunk in the pit which they made, 15
in the same net which they hid privily is their own foot
taken;
Jehovah shewed Himself—He hath executed judgment, 16
the ungodly is trapped in the work of his own hands.
Know that the ungodly shall return to the grave, 17
the heathen, yea all that forget God;
for the poor shall not alway be forgotten, 18
the patient abiding of the meek shall not perish for ever!
Up, Jehovah! let not man have the upper hand, 19
the heathen shall be judged in Thy sight!
put them in fear, O Jehovah! 20
let the heathen know themselves to be but men!

III. [Ps. x.]

a more detailed description of these troubles ;

Why standest Thou so far off, O Jehovah? 1
 and hidest Thy face in the needful time of trouble?
 the wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor, 2
 they are taken in the devices he hath imagined ;
 the ungodly maketh boast of his own heart's desire, 3
 the covetous man renounceth and despiseth Jehovah.

The ungodly hath a high look, and [saith]: 'He heedeth not, 4
 —there is no God'—these are all his thoughts:
 his way doth always prosper, 5
 Thy judgments are far above out of his sight,
 as for his enemies, he defieth them,
 and in his heart he saith, 'tush, I shall never be cast down, 6
 there shall no harm happen unto me.'

His mouth is full of cursing, deceit and fraud, 7
 under his tongue is mischief and destruction ;
 he sitteth in the lurking-places of the villages, 8
 yea, privily in his lurking dens doth he slay the innocent ;
 his eyes are privily set against the poor, 9
 he lieth waiting secretly as a lion in his lair !

Yea, he lurketh to ravish the poor,
 he doth ravish the poor and getteth him into his net ;
 he croucheth, he lieth down,— 10
 and the poor do fall into his jaws ;
 for he saith in his heart, 'tush, God hath forgotten, 12
 He hideth His face ; He will never see it !'

IV.

renewed prayer to Jehovah to effect a final deliverance from them.

Up, Jehovah! O God, lift up Thine hand, 13
 forget not the poor!
 wherefore should the wicked contemn God, 14
 while he doth say in his heart, 'tush! Thou carest not
 for it?'

Verily Thou hast seen it! for Thou beholdest mischief and
 wrong, 15
 to grave them on Thy hands; 16
 the poor committeth himself to Thee;
 Thou art always the helper of the fatherless.

Wilt Thou not break the arm of the ungodly? 17
 yea, his works Thou shalt seek and they shall not be found.
 Jehovah is king for ever and ever,
 let the heathen perish out of His land!

Zealously hast Thou defended the cause of the poor, O Je-
 hovah! 19
 Thou wilt establish their heart; Thine ear hearkeneth thereto,
 to help the fatherless and poor to their right, 20
 that the men of the earth be no more exalted against Thee!

Ps. x. 3. *desire, i. e.* not of Jehovah, as is due, but of his own heart's desire.
 Cp. Habakkuk i. 11—16, "Then shall his mind change and he shall pass over
 and offend, imputing this his power unto his god * * *. Therefore they
 sacrifice unto their net and burn incense unto their drag, because by them their
 portion is fat and their meat plenteous."

Ver. 8. Away from towns, where they might exercise their robberies un-
 observed.

Ver. 16. *to grave them, i. e.* so that they may be ever before Thee, remem-
 bered and punished. Cp. Is. xlix. 15, 16, "Yet will I not forget thee. Behold,
 I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands." Cp. also Deut. xxxii. 34, 35.

§ 62. PSALM XXXVII.

AN ALPHABETICAL PSALM¹.

¹ Cp. §§ 61,
62, and § 130
Ps. cxix.

THE sure connexion between wickedness and punishment was a lesson, which was impressed upon the men of that age by the destruction of unrighteous empires and the fall of tyrants; and it is here set forth by the Psalmist, a man clearly of age and experience, in a Psalm composed mainly of quotations² from other books, with a burden of practical admonition, not to envy the present prosperity of the wicked but rather to wait in patient resignation for the just judgments of God.

² Cp. v. 1 with
Prov. xxiv.
19.
v. 4 with Job
xxvii. 10.
v. 6 with
Job xi. 17.
vv. 10 and 36
with Job viii.
18.
v. 13 with
§ 16 Ps. ii. 4.
v. 16 with
Prov. xv. 16.
v. 23 with
Prov. xx. 24.

I.

- A**gainst the ungodly fret not thyself, 1
 neither be thou envious against the evil doers;
 for they shall soon be cut down like the grass, 2
 and be withered even as the green herb.
Be doing good and put thy trust in the Lord; 3
 dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed;
 delight thou in Jehovah, 4
 and He shall give thee thy heart's desire!
Commit thy ways unto Jehovah, 5
 put thy trust in Him and He shall bring it to pass,
 He shall make thy righteousness as clear as the light, 6
 and thy cause as clear as the noonday!
Do thou rest in Jehovah, wait patiently for Him, 7
 and grieve not thyself at him whose way doth prosper,
 against the man that doeth after evil counsels.

Eschew wrath and let go displeasure, 8
and fret not thyself, else shall thou be moved to do evil:
wicked doers shall be rooted out, 9
and they that patiently abide in God, these shall inherit
the land.
For yet a little while,—and the ungodly shall be clean gone; 10
thou shalt look after his place, and he shall be away!
but the meekspirited shall possess the earth, 11
and shall be refreshed in the multitude of peace.

II.

Go to, ye that seek counsel against the just, 12
and gnash upon him with your teeth;
the Lord shall laugh you to scorn, 13
for He hath seen that your day is coming.
His sword hath the ungodly drawn and bent his bow, 14
to cast down the poor and needy and to slay the upright;
but his sword shall go through his own heart, 15
and his bow shall be broken.
Is not a small thing that the righteous hath 16
better than great riches of the ungodly?
for the arms of the ungodly shall be broken, 17
but Jehovah upholdeth the righteous.
Jehovah knoweth the days of the godly, 18
and their inheritance shall endure for ever;
they shall not be ashamed in the perilous time, 19
and in the days of dearth they shall have enough.
Know that the ungodly shall perish, 20
and the enemies of Jehovah are as the flower of the field,
they shall consume—yea, even in smoke shall they con-
sume away!

III.

- L**o! the ungodly borroweth and payeth not again, 21
 but the righteous is merciful and liberal;
 such as are blessed of God shall possess the land, 22
 and they that are cursed of Him shall be rooted out.
- M**oreover Jehovah ordereth a good man's going, 23
 and He hath pleasure in his way;
 though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast away, 24
 for Jehovah upholdeth him with His hand.
- N**ever, though I have been young and now am old, 25
 have I seen the righteous forsaken and his seed begging
 their bread;
 the righteous is ever merciful and lendeth, 26
 and his seed is blessed.
- O**h, flee from evil and do the thing that is good, 27
 and so thou shalt dwell for evermore;
 for Jehovah loveth the thing that is right, 28
 He forsaketh not His saints.
- P**unishment awaiteth the unrighteous, 29
 as for the seed of the ungodly, it shall be rooted out,
 the righteous shall inherit the land 30
 and dwell therein for ever.
- R**ighteousness uttereth wisdom with her lips, 31
 and the tongue of the righteous speaketh judgment;
 the law of his God is in his heart, 32
 and his goings shall not slide!
- S**ee, how the wicked lieth in wait for the righteous 33
 and seeketh occasion to slay him;
 but Jehovah will not leave him in his hand, 34
 nor condemn him when he is judged.

- T**rust thou in Jehovah and keep His way, 35
 and He shall promote thee to inherit the land,
 when the ungodly shall perish, thou shalt see it.
- U**ngodly men have I seen in great power, 36
 and flourishing like a green bay tree ;
 yet he passed away and lo, he was gone ; 37
 I sought him, but his place could nowhere be found.
- V**iew the perfect man and behold the upright, 38
 how the man of peace hath prosperity ;
 but as for transgressors, they shall perish together, 39
 the posterity of the wicked shall be rooted out.
- Y**ea, the salvation of the righteous cometh of Jehovah ; 40
 He is their strength in time of trouble ;
 Jehovah standeth by and delivereth them, 41
 He delivereth them from the ungodly and saveth them,
 because they put their trust in Him.

§ 63. PSALM LXXII.

THIS Psalm contains a prayer for blessing on a king who had just ascended the throne. It is evidently some later king—Josiah, for example, or one later still, for the prayer throughout is that the diminished and impoverished kingdom of David may be restored to its former greatness and position in the world.

The Psalmist gives utterance to their hopes of a great deliverer—a messiah, the type as it were of the Messiah—who should restore the kingdom to Israel¹. These hopes had long been cherished in the hearts of the people ; great pro-

¹ Cp. note
 § 37 Ps.
 lxxvi. and
 note.

phets were their standing expression ; and the accession of a new king—especially of a king of youth and promise—would be an occasion to call them more warmly forth.

It is not the deliverance of the sword, to which the hopes of the Psalmist point, but to a wise and understanding heart in the king to discern between good and evil², to a mind filled with the wisdom of God to judge² 1 Kings iii. 9 and 28. His people. Upon this the prosperity of the nation was to be based : with such foundation of internal justice external power and prosperity would grow ; and strangers would flock with their tribute of admiration and homage to the nation which was so ruled, and to the king who so ruled them³ ; and in this union of inward and outward³ 272. 8—15. blessing the earth would, as it were, enjoy a new youth.

But the very grandeur of these hopes and the mode of their expression shows that in no mere man—not even a king—could they be fulfilled. Hence they pass into a prayer to God, that He may give the king strength to effect this great deliverance.

I.

Prayer for the prosperity of the King,

Give the king Thy judgments, O God !	I
and Thy righteousness unto the king's son ;	
then shall he judge Thy people with equity	2
and Thy poor according unto right ;	

the mountains also shall bring blessing to the people, 3
and the little hills, through righteousness!

Let him keep the suffering folk by their right, 4
let him defend the children of the poor,
and the oppressor let him utterly destroy!

* * * * *

then shall they fear Thee as long as the sun and moon endureth, 5
from one generation to another!

Let it come down like the rain upon the mown field, 6
even as drops of rain that water the earth;

in his time let the righteous flourish, 7
yea, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth.

II.

for the restoration of his dominion, for he is the protector of the poor.

Let his dominion be also from sea to sea, 8
and from the river even unto the world's end;

let them that dwell in the wilderness kneel before him, 9
and let his enemies lick the dust;

let the kings of Tarshish and of the isles give presents, 10
let the kings of Arabia and Saba bring gifts,

yea, let all kings fall down before him, 11
let all nations do him service!

For he delivereth the poor when he crieth, 12
the needy also that hath no helper,

he is favourable to the simple and needy, 13
and preserveth the souls of the poor—

he delivereth their souls from oppression and wrong, 14
and dear is their blood in his sight—

so that they may flourish and give unto him of the gold of
 Arabia, 15
 and make prayer for him without ceasing,
 and praise him every day.

III.

Repetition of prayer for universal and everlasting dominion.

Let there be an heap of corn in the land high upon the hills! 16
 Let his fruit be high as the hill of Libanus,
 and let people spring up in the city as grass upon the earth!
 let his name endure for ever, 17
 as long as the sun endureth, let his name increase;
 and let all the peoples be blessed through him,
 yea let all the peoples praise him!

Ver. 1. *Thy judgments*, i. e. the decisions which the king, in his character of judge, would be called on to make. The Psalmist's prayer is, that these may be in accordance with the will of God. For the meaning of righteousness and the understanding heart, cp. Solomon's prayer, 1 Kings iii. 9.

Ver. 3. Cp. Isaiah xxxii. 16, 17. "Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness and righteousness remain in the fruitful field: and the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever."

After ver. 4 one verse of 2 lines is wanting to complete the sense and the structure of the stanza. Ewald believes that the sense of ver. 1 is repeated; and that the missing link may be supplied by words like,

'Give the king Thy judgments, O God!
 and cover him with Thy righteousness;'

Ver. 8. *the river*, i. e. the Euphrates.

Ver. 16. *his fruit*, i. e. let the posterity of the king be numerous and strong, as a heap piled high as mount Lebanon.

Ver. 17. The two verses which are added in the Authorised Version belong, not to the Psalm, but to the Book. Cp. § 29 Ps. xli. note on ver. 12.

NOTE ON THE HISTORY OF MESSIANIC EXPECTATIONS DURING
THE PERIOD OF THE PSALTER.

GOD's revelation of the Messiah as of other truths was gradual and may not unfitly be described as a growth. Up to the time of the first period of decadence after the reign of David, the several stages of revelation may be looked upon as a preparation, as it were, of the soil, upon which the further revelation of a Messiah, preceded by judgment, was to be planted and to bear fruit. The call of Abraham,—the setting apart the Jewish nation from the rest of the world,—their belief in One invisible ruler of the universe, One just and holy God as their God,—their acceptance of an order of men who should rule as His vicegerents, were all necessary steps in the order of divine providence to the further revelation of a Messiah; they were periods, so to speak, of that 'fulness of time,' which was not complete till an era excluded by the historical character of this work from present consideration.

The origin of this hope has been already spoken of¹ as to be sought in the great revelation of the Old Testament, namely, the revelation of one God and the capability of spiritual life which ensued to the Jewish nation from this belief.

The doctrine that God is One and that God is a Spirit had been maintained as a philosophical tenet before; but here was a whole nation carrying this belief into its daily life, into every kind of society, into all sorts of occupations; this belief was the very centre and keystone of their national existence; the highest spirits of the nation were its living witnesses; and it was this belief which made them the very instrument that was wanted for the conversion of the world. In spite of the heathen tendencies of Solomon's reign, which after the secession of Jeroboam had their abiding stronghold in the northern kingdom and were never without their adherents in the south, this belief was always stoutly maintained. Its champions

¹ Cp. note on the origin of Messianic Expectations, § 37 Ps. lxxvi.

were 'the goodly fellowship of the Prophets,' those chosen heroes in the cause of divine truth, into whose hearts God had breathed a fuller measure of His Spirit, that they might make it known to their fellow men. From this belief, supported, not by arguments which always provoke the thought of counter-arguments, but by the unconscious evidence of their lives, came a spiritual atmosphere fit for new converts to breathe; from this belief came forms of language and expression fit for new converts to use; it was the source of those everlasting truths, those 'thoughts of God,' which unshaken amid the surgings of human passion and caprice have ruled the world. Of such truths the two most prominent are the immortality of the soul and the hope of a great deliverer reigning after judgment in righteousness and gathering up all the world without distinction of race into one kingdom.

We shall see in a remarkable group of Psalms of this period², how the Jews gained the first glimpse of their own immortality; it is the object of this note to trace the growth of the Messianic hope from its first dim revelation in the time after David to its meridian splendour in the prophecies of the 2nd Isaiah, or as he has been well called, the 'Evangelical Prophet.'

Kings like Asa and Jehoshaphat were utterly powerless to raise the kingdom of Judah from the depth to which it had fallen. Overshadowed by the powerful kingdom of Israel under the rule of the house of Omri as a neighbour and rival,—scarcely able to maintain its very existence against the nations formerly its vassals by which it was surrounded,—and yet conscious of its high calling as the guardian of the pure religion of Jehovah, this little kingdom could never forget the glories of its history under Moses and David. The very blows which had broken its human pride kept awake this consciousness; and the very impossibility of recovering that lost dominion roused the nobler spirits of the nation to grasp in living faith and hope the spiritual and abiding element of David's kingdom, which made him, for them as for us, the type of the Messiah.

² §§ 64—66 Pss. xvii, xvi, xlix, and introduction.

Thus the very humiliation which was so fatal to the earthly expectations of the Jews, was in the order of God's providence the means, by which their minds were opened to receive the first revelation of a great deliverer,—an anointed one, for that is the meaning of the Hebrew word, Messiah,—who should judge the world and restore the kingdom to Israel. The basis of this national expectation, in connexion with David, was the promise, imparted to him by Nathan³, that even after his death God would establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. In each successive period of affliction their expectations became more pure from earthly dross, their faith in the promise more deeply rooted. So early as the latter part of Solomon's reign when the division of the kingdom was impending and no prospect was before them save of dissolution and ruin, Ahijah the Shilonite in his very prediction of that dissolution, expressly reserved the rights of David's house to the fulfilment of the promise⁴.

The hope in this early time was limited to this main point, that God would surely fulfil His promise. There is no trace of its being connected with one man, still less with one particular man, as it was in the later time of Isaiah. It only recognised the truth that men, as they then were, were unable to accomplish the work, but that God would surely accomplish it; God, it was said by Joel, would come in a great and terrible day of judgment to put an end to the iniquity of the earth, and would pour out abundantly of His Spirit upon His people⁵, so that the kingdom might be restored; and when the war which was to restore David's house should end in an era of peace and prosperity, it pictured to itself all nations of the earth going as pilgrims to Jerusalem to learn the exceeding blessedness of the triumphs of the true religion of Jehovah.

In Hosea, who follows Joel, a step is gained in the catholicity of the revelation. From Hosea, the tenderest expounder of the love, with which God will regard His people, when His judgments shall

³ 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13.

⁴ 1 Kings xi. 36, 39.

⁵ Joel passim and especially ii. 28—32.

have purified their souls, we learn that it is not only the heathen but the chosen people, and the chosen people especially, who are to be purified through judgment; as it is from the 2nd Isaiah that we learn, that it is not the chosen people only but the Gentiles also, who are to be included in the Messianic kingdom.

As time advanced, the revelation of this kingdom became clearer and more spiritual. Each successive Prophet adds new features to the picture painted by his predecessor. What is spiritual abides. There was a growing feeling of the essential identity of the dominion of Israel and the dominion of the religion of Jehovah. What David had gained by the sword,—which seemed at his time to be the foundation of an universal empire,—was within a few years of Solomon's death lost by the sword; and no efforts which were made by the kings of Judah to recover this dominion were successful. It might be by other means than by the sword that the dominion of Jehovah was to be re-established. For it was no harshness or injustice on the part of the Jews, which drove such outlying kingdoms as Moab and Edom into rebellion; it was the love of a wild and dissolute life⁶, which they were unwilling to forfeit by union with a nation bound by the religion and worship of Jehovah. Thus the contest was felt to be not so much between the tribe of Judah and the surrounding tribes as between the worshippers of Jehovah and the heathen; and while a recovery of these dominions is still spoken of, the idea of war fades more and more from the description.

It was probably this conviction of the uselessness of war which at an earlier period led king Jehoshaphat to give up all attempts to subdue by force of arms the northern kingdom, and even to confirm the peace by a marriage between his son Joram and the daughter of the house of Ahab.

Later, when the northern kingdom had passed away and Zion remained unmoved, as a rock, amid the storms which had swept over the land, the hopes and aspirations of Jehovah's people, thus mightily

⁶ Cp. § 16 Ps. ii, introduction.

delivered, burned up more brightly than ever. It was no longer a merely general hope and belief, that Jehovah would somehow re-establish His kingdom ; but that a man, a royal deliverer, should come to rule in righteousness and to restore the ancient boundaries of the kingdom which David had won, as Jehovah's vicegerent. It is in the older Zechariah⁷ that we find for the first time this idea of a personal Messiah. Sion is to expect a king, who should rule from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth ; while in the two southern prophets, Isaiah and Micah, the two ideas, of individual judgment and of the redemption by a great prince of the house of David, came out in bold relief. It is in Micah, the foreteller of the fall of Jerusalem⁸, that we find in its full intensity the idea of the future supremacy of the chosen people.

But it is through Isaiah that the truth in this more definite form was finally revealed. Himself of royal lineage and endowed with the highest gifts of prophetic utterances, he was chosen to pourtray the image of this great king and to announce the certainty of his coming. The nation had drunk to the dregs the cup of misery, the penalty of misrule. Misrule they had experienced in all its varied forms ; and none even of the best kings had set before them the establishment of God's kingdom as the one sole end of national endeavour. Isaiah now proclaimed what the true king must be, and held up this glorious image of prophetic aspiration as well to the pious and despairing people as to the degenerate king⁹ and court actually ruling ; nay more, he proclaimed it in yet fuller and more fervid language when Sennacherib threatened Jehovah's people with annihilation. Then for the first time was the glorified vision of Jehovah's kingdom brought face to face with the barbaric might of heathen power ; then the prophet of God stood calm and undismayed against the furious threats of the self-styled king of kings¹⁰.

It seems that different prophets looked at different times to dif-

⁷ c. ix—xi. of the A. V.

⁸ iii. 12.

⁹ Ahaz. Cp. Dean Milman's *Hist. of the Jews*, i. 372.

¹⁰ Cp. §§ 35—39 Psalms celebrating the repulse of the Assyrian invasion.

ferent kings for the fulfilment in their persons of these Messianic hopes. Isaiah, in the reign of Ahaz¹¹, looked to the young prince Hezekiah as the great deliverer; at the period of the captivity, the 2nd Isaiah, who was the first to foretell the conversion of the Gentiles and to describe, in language which has gained for him the title of the Evangelical Prophet, the true character of the Messiah, at once the representative and redeemer of God's servant Israel, seems for a moment to glance at Cyrus¹², as the anointed who should deliver Israel by smiting its captor, and should be not only the deliverer and benefactor of Israel, but the inaugurator of a reign of righteousness and truth. Haggai and the 2nd Zechariah certainly saw him in Zerubbabel, "the Branch, who should bear the glory and should sit and rule upon His throne; and he shall be a priest upon His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both¹³."

But passing from these side-glances at persons who at most were partial and temporary fulfilments of prophecy to the grand picture made up by the successive touches of the whole 'fellowship of the Prophets,' we find the idea of the Messiah expanded at last into the whole Jewish nation¹⁴,—"mine elect, my servant Israel,"—who should redeem and deliver the Gentiles, as a conqueror not by the sword but by the spiritual weapons of suffering; and consequently no one person could fulfil this glorified idea of the Messiah, unless he could be considered as in himself the one representative of the whole people.

Thus it was in this darkest and dreariest period of the Jewish history that the hopes of a great deliverer shine most brightly through the gloom. These hopes found their perfect expression in the most magnificent chapters of all Hebrew prophecy¹⁵, which open with the key-note, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,"—the note of a revived and glorified Israel, and with the vision of a new world of love

¹¹ Is. vii. ix.

¹² Is. xlv. 28; xlv. 1.

¹³ *both*, *i. e.* Zerubbabel and Jeshua.

¹⁴ Cp. § 124 Ps. lxxxix. 37—50 and Introduction.

¹⁵ Is. xl—lxvi.

and justice, which was to gather up into one kingdom not only the seed of David but the whole human race¹⁶.

Such are the various forms of Messianic hope, which between the time of Rehoboam and Nehemiah swayed more or less powerfully the Jewish mind; the allusions to the same subject in the Psalms, which are in many cases lyrical embodiments of those feelings, naturally present less of detail, though as might be expected in lyric poetry they are characterised by fully as great a depth of feeling.

¹⁶ Is. xlix. 1, 6, 12, 22, 23; lx. 1—22; lxi. 1—11.

PERIOD III.

*PSALMS FROM THE DESTRUCTION OF THE
KINGDOM TO THE RETURN FROM CAP-
TIVITY.*

PERIOD III.

PSALMS FROM THE DESTRUCTION OF THE KINGDOM TO THE RETURN FROM CAPTIVITY.

SOME of the grandest and most spiritual Psalms are from this period; for though their language bears frequent and indelible marks of the deep¹ depression and sorrow and humiliation which had befallen the people, yet we find amid the gloom flashes of the deepest thought and of the highest spiritual truth.

Amidst such universal misery, it is not to be wondered, if in some Psalms the general tone of resignation is lost, nay, if in some it passes for a moment into fierce and terrible² imprecation. For what words can describe the agony of the captivity,—the rending away of higher hopes and deeper affections than any nation had yet been able to cherish or to feel? To the old evils of persecution, with which they had long been vexed, are added others peculiar to the captivity; contempt for the very sufferings of the persecuted and woe-stricken followers of Jehovah, contempt for the majesty of Jehovah Himself, as the God who could neither

¹ Cp. § 64 Ps. xvii. § 71 xxxviii. § 75 li. § 73 lxix. § 74 cix.

² § 70 Ps. xxxv. § 73 lxix. § 74 cix.

hear nor help ; above all, the absence of His visible presence, of that Temple, which had hitherto been the centre of light and warmth in the darkest days of trouble from scoffers within and from enemies without.

But it seems as though it were this very separation from their well-loved land, from the security and bliss afforded by their Temple, which could alone open their eyes to the truth, that spiritual¹ life and happiness in God must be looked for in other things than in ceremonial worship and sacrifice. Fainter traces of the same truth were to be found in earlier² times ; but not until the old religion had passed through this valley of the shadow of death, did its spiritual power and truth shine forth with a glorious and unclouded light. All outward and visible help, in which they had heretofore trusted, was irrevocably gone ; and by this ordeal³ hope and trust in God and cheerful resignation are not quenched, but purified and strengthened ; in their deep distress they recognise the length and breadth of their old follies and sins, and so become capable of a new and spiritual birth. The old Israel from its sorrows and its death rises again to a new life, and with prophetic assurance that the victory of the heathen was but for a time, looks forward in the midst of its suffering to a new and a sure deliverance⁴.

¹ § 65 Ps. xvi. § 72 xl. § 75 li. § 73 lxix.

² § 59 Ps. l.

³ § 51 Ps. lvi. § 52 lvii. § 69 xxii.

⁴ § 83 Ps. lxxxii. § 84 xiv. § 85 cxx. &c.

PERIOD III.

PSALMS FROM THE DESTRUCTION OF THE KINGDOM TO THE RETURN FROM CAPTIVITY.

[SECTIONS 64—89.]

§§ 64—66. PSALMS XVII, XVI, XLIX.

WE have here a group of Psalms, which express, faintly at first but with increasing certainty, the feeling now first beginning to dawn upon the Hebrew mind, that though the flesh and its glory perisheth, there is life for the soul with God.

Similarity alike of language and of sentiment point to one Psalmist as the author of these Psalms. We find in them a contrast drawn between God and the world¹, between the ¹xvii. 14. strivings of the Psalmist and those of worldly men²; in them, ²xvii. 2—5; xvi. 2—5; as in the psalms of David, the Psalmist's inward care and ^{xlix. 5, &c.}

watchfulness over his soul's health, courting rather than avoiding the scrutinising eye of God³; moreover, a burst of joy, with which he looks forward to the future⁴.

³ xvii. 2; xvi. 7, 8.

⁴ xvii. 16; xvi. 10—12; xlix. 16.

In these three Psalms we see the Psalmist face to face with the great problem of the time, the prosperity of the wicked. This is the riddle, 'the dark speech,' which he is prepared to make known upon his harp⁵; and in the first⁶ psalm of the group we witness the commencing struggles of heart which finally led to solution in the third.

⁵ xlix. 4.

⁶ xvii.

Assuredly no more momentous struggle ever swayed the heart of man than that which first led him to suspect himself to be immortal. The early Jews, even Moses and most of the Psalmists⁷, limit their view to the present life: even of David we find nothing to indicate that he dwelt upon any thought beyond; indeed in his consciousness of power as Jehovah's vicegerent to uproot all wickedness and wicked doers⁸, he lost the main impetus which turned the thoughts and feelings of the later Psalmists in this direction; just as in the serene enjoyment of the Holy place, where God's honour was to dwell, his satisfaction and happiness was too complete to allow questionings of heart as to the current belief that man was like to the beasts that perish.

⁷ § 26 Ps. vi. 5; § 33 Ps. xxxix. 13; § 50 Ps. lxxiii. 9; § 58 Ps. lxxxviii. § 102 Ps. cxv. 17.

⁸ Cp. § 6 Ps. ci. 11.

Among the causes which forced the conviction of a hereafter on the Hebrews, were (1) the observation of the prosperity of the wicked and of the misfortunes of the righteous in the world; (2) the earnest longing of the soul

for a more perfect communion with God than was possible in the present life.

So long in fact as adherence to Jehovah secured Jehovah's protection, and goodness went hand in hand with prosperity, there seemed to be even in this life a perfect fulfilment of God's promises; but when the connexion between worldly prosperity and adherence to Jehovah were sundered, when wickedness seemed to be triumphant, and the very name of God had passed into a mockery, it became evident to them that Jehovah must 'hold His assize in that mysterious region on the other side of death.' The faith of the Jew in the promises was undying. When their realization became impossible in this world, he looked forward to their fulfilment in a world to come.

Again it was first in this late time that the belief in that communion with God, which was the desire of every pious soul, became at once clearer and more spiritual. Hitherto it had been understood of this world; to see God was the reward of the righteous; Moses enjoyed it; 'I will speak mouth to mouth with Him,' said Jehovah to Aaron and Miriam,⁹ Numbers xii. 8. 'even apparently and not in dark speeches, and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold;' but it was only in these dark times, when the holiest and surest things were seen to be transitory, when the very city and the Temple, which secured them this communion with Jehovah, were destroyed, that the spirit, strong in the consciousness of its strength and participation of the divine nature, rose above

the world of sense and sight, broke through the shackles imposed by the common belief of a Sheol, or Orcus, or Hades¹⁰, in which the spirits of the departed were represented as dreamy unconscious shades confined in a land of forgetfulness, and gained glimpses of that higher immortality¹¹ which first became a world-belief in later times.

¹⁰ See note.

¹¹ § 65 Ps.
xvi. 9—11.

¹² xvii.

The first of the three Psalms¹² was written in the midst of the terror caused by persecution whether of tyrant or of heathen or of idolatrous Israelites; it is full of passionate appeal, alternations of hope and despair, and the haven of rest in God's presence is hardly attained. Between this and the next Psalm¹³ there is a wide interval, if not of time at least of spiritual experience; in the 16th Psalm all trace of struggle and fear is gone; it is pervaded by the sunshine of peace; hope has become fruition, and in Jehovah's presence there is fulness of joy. In the last Psalm¹⁴ of the group the experience of the two former Psalms is set forth as doctrine.

¹³ xvi.

¹⁴ xlix.

Note. This Hades is rendered Hell in our authorised Version; but as Hell is generally understood now as a place of punishment, for which the Hebrew word is Gehenna, the word 'grave' has been substituted as the best rendering of Sheol in the present translation.

§ 64. PSALM XVII.

I.

The Psalmist in the consciousness of his own uprightness prayeth to God,

Hear the right, O Jehovah, consider my complaint, 1
 and hearken unto my prayer that goeth not out of feigned
 lips!
 my sentence cometh forth from Thy presence, 2
 and Thine eyes look upon the thing that is equal;
 Thou hast proved and visited my heart in the night season, 3
 Thou hast tried me and findest no wickedness in me, and
 my mouth doth not offend;
 as for men's ways,—by the word of Thy lips 4
 I have kept me from the paths of the violent man:
 my goings were holden up in Thy paths, 5
 my footsteps slipped not.
 I call upon Thee, for Thou hearest me, O God! 6
 incline Thine ear unto me and hearken unto my words!

II.

against the persecution of the wicked,

Shew Thy marvellous loving-kindness, Thou that art the saviour
 of them that put their trust in Thee, 7
 from such as resist Thy right hand!
 keep me as the apple of an eye, 8
 hide me under the shadow of Thy wings,
 from the ungodly that trouble me, 9
 from mine enemies that compass me to take away my life;
 they have enclosed their heart in fat, 10
 and with their mouth they speak proud things,

they lie waiting in our way on every side, 11
 and turn their eyes to spy through the land:
 like as a lion that is greedy of his prey, 12
 and as it were a young lion, lurking in his secret places.

III.

that, though the wicked prosper, Jehovah may grant the Psalmist to behold His presence.

Up, Jehovah! disappoint him and cast him down, 13
 deliver my life from the ungodly by Thy sword,
 from men, O Jehovah, by Thy hand,—from men of this world, 14
 which have their pleasure in this life, whose bellies Thou
 fillest with Thy treasure,
 who have children at their desire and leave their substance to
 their babes! 15
 But as for me, let me behold Thy presence in righteousness, 16
 and when I awake up, let me be satisfied with Thy likeness!

Ver. 10. *in fat, i. e.* have shut up their heart against all pity. Cp. § 80 Ps. lxxiii. 7, and § 130 Ps. cxix. 70.

Ver. 14. Cp. Job xxi. 7—14.

The idea of *the world* in the New Testament sense has not occurred before.

Ver. 16. Compare this prayer with Jehovah's declaration, Numbers xii. 8, to Miriam and Aaron, that He spake mouth to mouth with Moses.

§ 65. PSALM XVI.

I.

The Psalmist's confidence in Jehovah, in spite of the apostasy of his friends;

Preserve me, O God! for in Thee have I put my trust.	1
I say of Jehovah, Thou art my Lord,	2
my goods are nothing in comparison of Thee!	
The saints which are in the land,	3
and the nobles, in whom is all my delight—	
they multiply their idols and run after other gods;	4
their drinkofferings of blood may I not offer,	5
neither make mention of their names within my lips.	

II.

joy in Jehovah's presence his strength against temptation;

Jehovah is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup;	6
Thou art the possession of my lot!	
the lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places,	7
yea, I have a goodly heritage.	
I bless Jehovah, for that He gave me counsel,	8
that my reins also admonished me in the night season;	
I have set Jehovah always before me;	9
because He is on my right hand, therefore I shall not fall.	

III.

for in that presence is everlasting life.

Wherefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth:	10
my flesh also shall rest in hope!	

for why? Thou shalt not leave my soul in the grave, 11
 neither shalt Thou suffer Thy loved ones to see corruption ;
 Thou shalt shew me the path of life : 12
 in Thy presence is the fulness of joy,
 and in Thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore.

Ver. 3. *saints, i.e.* the Israelites, "the kingdom of priests, the holy nation," Ex. xix. 6, "the saints," Deut. xxxiii. 3, "my beloved," Jer. xi. 15, follow after the heathen.

Ver. 6. *portion. cup.* The double image of the division of a conquered land and the handing of the cup from the head of the family to each member seated at the table. His portion is the living presence of Jehovah, who counsels warns and protects him against the evil.

Ver. 10. Cp. § 52 Ps. lvii. 9, and note.

Vv. 10—12. For this assurance of immortality for the soul of man in the presence of God cp. § 66 Ps. xlix. 15 and Job xix. 26, 27: in § 47 Ps. xxxvi. 9, and Proverbs xii. 28 we find the same thought more faintly expressed.

§ 66. PSALM XLIX.

I.

Summons to hear the great lesson,

O hear ye this, all ye people, 1
 give ear, all ye that dwell in the world ;
 high and low, rich and poor, 2
 one with another !
 my mouth shall speak of wisdom, 3
 and my heart shall muse of understanding ;
 I will incline mine ear unto the parable, 4
 and shew my dark speech upon the harp :

II.

*that the prosperity of the wicked need cause no fear; for wealth without
God is of no avail.*

Wherefore should I fear in the days of wickedness, 5
when the sin of them that would overthrow me doth compass me about,
of them that put their trust in their goods, 6
and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches?
but surely none of them may redeem himself, 7
nor give a ransom for himself to God,—
for it costeth too much to redeem the soul,— 8
that must be let alone for ever—
so that he may still continue to live 9
and not see the grave:
nay, but he shall see it; wise men also die, 10
and perish together, as well as the ignorant and the foolish,
and leave their riches for other;
nay, the grave is their everlasting habitation, 11
their dwelling-place from generation to generation,
—they who were had in honour through the land!
and man in his glory so he have no understanding 12
is like unto the beasts that are slaughtered and perish.

III.

Death is the end of the foolish; but the righteous hath length of days.

This is the way of them that love foolishness, 13
and of all those that after them praise their sayings;
like sheep, that are appointed to be slain,—death shall be their
shepherd, 14
and the righteous have dominion over them;

yet a little while—and their beauty shall consume away,
 it shall have its dwelling in the grave.
 But God will redeem my soul 15
 from the hand of the grave, when it layeth hold on me.

Exhortation to the righteous.

Be thou not afraid, though one be made rich, 16
 or if the glory of his house be increased ;
 for he shall carry nothing away with him when he dieth, 17
 neither shall his pomp follow him ;
 for though, while he liveth, he counteth himself an happy man, 18
 and though men praise thee, when thou doest well unto
 thyself,
 yet he shall follow the generation of his fathers, 19
 and nevermore shall they see the light !
and man in his glory so he have no understanding 20
is like unto the beasts that are slaughtered and perish !

Ver. 4. *dark speech.* Cp. Numbers xii. 8, a fact or a truth to be explained. Cp. in the N. T. the use of the word mystery, to express a truth before hidden but now revealed. The sense therefore is; I will explain by my song what was before a riddle, viz. the prosperity of the wicked.

Ver. 8. God is so high above man, that he can find no ransom which would persuade God to let him live.

Ver. 14. Cp. § 119 Ps. xliv. 12, 22.

Ver. 15. Cp. § 65 Ps. xvi. 10—12, and Hos. xiii. 14, and Gen. v. 24.

Ver. 18. Cp. Luke xii. 19, &c.

thee is equivalent to *him* of the preceding line, but is more graphic.

§§ 67, 68. PSALMS XLII, XLIII, LXXXIV.

IN these Psalms the language is that of the captivity. The terrible blow had come at last: the King and the nobles were carried away to Babylon.

Jeremiah and Ezekiel abound with expressions which indicate the poignancy of the national anguish at this overwhelming calamity. The last of David's line, the lion¹ cub of the house of Judah, 'was cast away like a broken² and despised vessel; the voice of the young lion³ should no more be heard on the mountains of Israel; the topmost and tenderest shoot of the royal⁴ cedar tree had been plucked off by the eagle of the East and planted far away in the merchant city of Euphrates. From the top of Lebanon, from the heights of Bashan, from the ridges of Abairim the widowed country shrieked aloud, as she saw the train of her captive King and nobles disappearing in the distant East. From the heights of Hermon, from the top of Mizar, it is no improbable conjecture that the departing King poured forth this exquisitely plaintive song, in which, from the deep disquietude of his heart, he longs after the presence of God in the Temple, and pleads his cause against the impious nation, the treacherous and unjust man who in spite of plighted⁵ faith, had torn him away from his beloved home⁶.'

¹ Ezek. xix. 6.

² Jer. xxii. 24, 28.

³ Ezek. xix. 8.

⁴ Ezek. xvii. 4.

⁵ § 67 xliii. 1, 2; Joseph. *Antiq.* x, 9.
⁶ Stanley's *Lectures on Jewish Church*, 2nd Series, p. 541.

§ 67. PSALM XLII, XLIII.

I. [Ps. XLII.]

The Psalmist torn from his native land, amid the taunts of his captors, dwelleth lovingly on the joyous festivals of the Temple;

Like as the hart desireth the waterbrooks, 1
 so longeth my soul after Thee, O God!
 my soul is athirst for God, yea even for the living God; 2
 when shall I come to appear before the presence of God?
 my tears have been my meat day and night, 3
 while they daily say unto me, 'where is now thy God?'
 Now when I think thereupon, I pour out my heart within me, 4
 how I went with the multitude,
 and brought them forth into the house of God,
 with the voice of praise and thanksgiving, with such as keep
 holyday! 5
Why art thou so heavy, O my soul, and why art thou so dis-
quieted within me? 6
O put thy trust in God, for I will yet give Him thanks, 7
which is the help of my countenance and my God!

II.

as he taketh his last look from the hills which bound his country, he is overwhelmed with grief;

My God! my soul is heavy within me; 8
 therefore I remember Thee from the land of Jordan, of
 Hermon, and the hill of Mizar.
 One flood calleth unto another at the noise of Thy waterspouts; 9
 all Thy waves and billows are gone over me.
 Jehovah hath granted His lovingkindness in the daytime, 10
 and in the night season do I sing of Him and make my
 prayer unto the God of my life;

I say unto the God of my strength, "why hast Thou forgotten me?" 11

why go I thus heavily while the enemy oppresseth me?
my bones are smitten asunder while mine enemies reproach me; 12

namely, while they say daily unto me, 'where is now thy God?'" 13

*Why art thou so heavy, O my soul, and why art thou so dis-
quieted within me?* 14

*O put thy trust in God, for I will yet praise Him,
which is the help of my countenance and my God!* 15

III. [PS. XLIII.]

*but riseth to hope in the thought that God would deliver him from his oppressors and
restore him.*

Give sentence upon me, O God! 1

and defend my cause against the ungodly people,

O deliver me from the deceitful and wicked man!

for Thou art the God of my strength: why hast Thou put me
from Thee? 2

and why go I so heavily, while the enemy oppresseth me?

O send out Thy light and Thy truth! that they may lead me, 3
and bring me unto Thy holy hill and to Thy dwelling!

that I may go unto the altar of God, 4

even unto the God of my joy and gladness,

and upon the harp will I give thanks unto Thee, O God,
my God!

*Why art thou so heavy, O my soul, and why art thou so dis-
quieted within me?* 5

*O put thy trust in God, for I will yet praise Him,
which is the help of my countenance and my God!*

[Ps. xlii.] Ver. 2. *living God*, opposed to the gods of the heathen.

Ver. 4. *I pour out my heart*, so that it brings me to despair, when amid the mockery of wicked men I think on the time when I led up processions to the temple of God. Cp. Job x. 1 & xxx. 16.

Ver. 8. *the hill of Mizar* is not known. *the land of Jordan* and *of the two Hermons*, i. e. the North.

Ver. 9. At the thunder of the torrent of God's displeasure, wave biddeth wave come on;—a picture of a rapid succession of calamities.

Ver. 12. The mockery and reproach of my enemies is as though my very bones were being crushed and destroyed within me.

§ 68. PSALM LXXXIV.

7. 10.

²The Temple was still standing,

7. 4.

THIS Psalm is probably from the pen of the same king¹, written later, but in one² of the first ten of those 36 years during which he languished in a Babylonian prison. Pilgrimages to the beloved city are already common, and the king from the recesses of his dungeon dwells upon the blessedness of those, who though captive are free to revisit their country and join again in the worship of Jehovah. Time has indeed mitigated the poignancy of anguish, expressed in the preceding Psalm, at being torn from his palace and the Temple. The nobleness³ of character which led him amid the afflictions of imprisonment to forget his own troubles in dwelling on the happy lot of his subjects, enables us to understand how the people living under the feebleness of Zedekiah looked forward with longing to his return, emancipated as he had now become from the unfortunate⁴ influences of his brief and boyish reign.

³ Joseph. *Antiq.* x. 9.

⁴ 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9; 2 Kings xxiv. 9.

I.

The Psalmist longeth in absence for the holy place,

O how lovely are Thy dwellings, 1
 Jehovah God of Hosts!
 my soul hath a desire and longing for the courts of Jehovah: 2
 my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.
 Yea the sparrow hath found her an house and the swallow a
 nest, 3
 where she may lay her young,
 even Thy altars, O Jehovah God of Hosts,
 my King and my God!

II.

*proclaimeth blessing on them that dwell there or face the dangers of
 the pilgrimage.*

Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: 4
 they shall yet live to praise Thee!
 blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee, 5
 who loveth to think on journeying to Thy house;
 who going through the vale of misery make it a well, 6
 yea, an early rain falleth and covereth it with blessing!
 they go from strength to strength, 7
 and so they appear before God in Sion.

III.

Jehovah God of Hosts, hear Thou my prayer, 8
 hearken, O God of Jacob!
 behold, O God, our defender, 9
 and look upon the face of Thine anointed!
 For one day in Thy courts is better than a thousand: 10
 I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God 11
 than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness.

For Jehovah our God is a light and a defence! 12
 Jehovah will give grace and glory,
 and no good thing shall He withhold from them that live
 a godly life.

IV.

O Jehovah God of Hosts, 13
 blessed is the man that putteth his trust in Thee!

Ver. 4. *shall yet, i. e.* a better time shall come for those who are at Jerusalem.

Ver. 6. Who having undertaken a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, go through the Baka valley, 'the vale of misery,' which forms the entrance to Palestine. The cheering prospect of reaching God's house covers the barren desert with blessing. For this picture cp. Hosea ii. 14, 15, Is. xxxv. 6, 7.

§ 69. PSALM XXII.

THIS Psalm was composed in a time of persecution, before the fall of the Temple¹. The Psalmist, an exile in the hands of the heathen², in extreme peril³ and condemned to death⁴, is a notable memorial how a worshipper of Jehovah could at such a time win his way to hope from the depths of despair. He depicts himself as a condemned prisoner in a heathen dungeon, with his enemies already exulting over his approaching execution, and feels that the very God for whose sake he is suffering has abandoned him to the scorn of his enemies. Yet out of all this he rises through prayer to realize a time, when he shall have been so signally delivered that the story of his life shall solace the sufferer in every age.

¹ *277*. 22, 25,
cf. v. 3.

² *v. 27.*

³ *277*. 1, 7, 11,
 14.

⁴ *v. 18* and
note, v. 30.

I.

The Psalmist though he cried to God is forsaken and mocked,

My God, my God! why hast Thou forsaken me, 1
and art so far from my help and from the words of my
complaint!

O my God! I cry in the day-time but Thou hearest not, 2
in the night season also, and take no rest;

and yet Thou art the Holy One, 3
who dwellest among the praises of Israel;

our fathers trusted in Thee 4
they trusted in Thee and Thou didst deliver them;

they called upon Thee and were holpen; 5
they put their trust in Thee and were not confounded.

But as for me, I am a worm and no man, 6
a very scorn of men and the outcast of the people;

all they that see me laugh me to scorn, 7
they shoot out their lips and shake their heads,

saying, 'he trusted in God; let Him deliver him, 8
let Him deliver him if He will have him.'

yet he prayeth again to his Helper of old.

But Thou art He that took me out of my mother's womb; 9
Thou wert my stay when I hanged yet upon my mother's
breasts.

I have been left unto Thee ever since I was born, 10
Thou art my God even from my mother's womb.

O go not far from me for trouble is nigh at hand, 11
and there is none to help.

II.

Enemies surround him in his suffering and condemnation,

Many oxen are come about me, 12
mighty bulls of Basan close me in on every side,
they gape upon me with their mouths, 13
as it were a ravening and a roaring lion!
I am poured out like water, 14
and all my bones stick out;
my heart also in the midst of my body
is even like melting wax;
the skin of my mouth is dried up like a potsherd, 15
and my tongue cleaveth to my gums;
and wilt Thou bring me to the dust of death?
for dogs are come about me, 16
the host of wicked men have laid siege against me,
they have bound my hands and my feet; 17
I may tell all my bones,
they stand staring and looking upon me,
they part my garments among them,
and cast lots upon my vesture. 18

and yet he reneweth his prayer;

But Thou, O Jehovah, be not far from me; 19
Thou art my strength, haste Thee to help me!
deliver my soul from the sword, 20
my darling from the power of the dog!
save me from the lion's mouth, 21
and hear me from among the horns of the buffaloes.

III.

on his delivery, he will cause God to be praised by all the world;

I will declare Thy name unto my brethren, 22

in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee !

“O praise Jehovah, ye that fear Him, 23

magnify Him, all ye seed of Jacob,

and tremble before Him, all ye seed of Israel :

for He hath not despised nor abhorred the low estate of

the poor, 24

He hath not hid His face from him,

but when he called unto Him, He heard him.”

My praise is of Thee in the great congregation, 25

my vows will I perform in the sight of them that fear Him :

the poor shall eat and be satisfied, 26

they that seek after Jehovah shall praise Him ;

may your heart live for ever !

that all the ends of the world may remember this and be

turned to Jehovah, 27

and all the kindreds of the nations may worship before Him :

for the kingdom is Jehovah's, 28

and He is the Governor among the peoples.

his story will solace the suffering and live among posterity.

All such as be sad upon earth shall eat and do Him worship, 29

all they that go down into the dust shall kneel before Him, 30

and whoso keepeth not his own soul alive.

Our seed shall serve Him, 31

the story of the Lord shall be told to them that come after ;

they shall come and shall declare His deliverance, 32

yea to the people that shall be born, that He hath done this.

Ver. 1. *so far*. § 119 cp. Ps. xlv. 23, 24; § 76 lxxi. 10.

Ver. 3. This title, 'who dwelleth among the praises of Israel,' has supplied the place of the older title 'which dwelleth between the cherubims,' which occurs in 1 Sam. iv. 4 and 2 Sam. vi. 2, and is repeated in later Psalms § 108 xcix. 1, and § 122 lxxx. 1. The Israelites loved to think of God as dwelling in the Temple they had built, and ever at hand to aid them: to them it was "our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee." Isaiah lxiv. 11; in its "most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims" was the oracle of God, 1 Kings viii. 6; hence the older title denoted a God, never far from His people, ever ready to aid and to counsel them. The new title expresses the same attributes of God, but no longer connects them with the place 'where our fathers praised God,' but with the praises they uttered; wherever the people were gathered together to praise God, there was He in the midst of them.

Ver. 7. *shoot out their lips*. Cp. Job xvi. 10, "They have gaped upon me with their mouth." *shake*. Cp. Lam. ii. 15; § 119 Ps. xlv. 15, § 74 Ps. cix. 24.

Ver. 9. Cp. § 76 Ps. lxxi. 5.

Ver. 12. *mighty*: lit. "mighty ones." The same metaphor occurs also Amos iv. 1, "Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy."

Ver. 14. *stick out*. This is explained by Job xxxiii. 21, § 41 Ps. cxli. 8.

Ver. 17. *i. e.* triumphing over me in my captivity and ill-treatment.

Ver. 18. *lots*, as was customary in the case of condemned prisoners. Cp. Joel iii. 3; Ob. xi.; Nah. iii. 10.

Ver. 20. The Psalmist here, to describe his enemies, returns to the use of the images used in ver. 13.

my darling. Cp. § 70 Ps. xxxv. 17: the parallelism shews that this expression is synonymous with *my soul*, and therefore denotes the Psalmist.

Ver. 21. *from among*, the prayer of the Psalmist comes to God from among the horns of the buffaloes.

Ver. 26. *your, i. e.* their; by a change not uncommon in Hebrew poetry.

Ver. 29. *shall eat*; according to the metaphor, their sadness is changed into banqueting.

Ver. 30. *whoso keepeth not*: lit. 'who respited not his life;' *i. e.* a prisoner in immediate peril of execution.

§§ 70—78. PSALMS XXXV, XXXVIII, XL (INCLUDING
LXX), LXIX, CIX, LI, LXXI, XXV, XXXIV.

THESE Psalms are grouped together because they bear a common impress: they are pervaded by a marked similarity of sentiments, they seem called forth by similar circumstances; they represent indeed changes of life and changes of character, for at one time¹ they record the despairing cry of an exile, at another some fierce² struggle in a believer's soul, or his reviving trust³ in God; yet these changes are not more than might well be experienced in a long and eventful life, and are not such as to preclude the idea suggested by their general similarity, that they are the work of one author.

It is true that the historical books do not enable us to assign the authorship of these Psalms to any character in the history, but the writer's life may be gathered from the Psalms. He is an exile, so hopelessly cut off from the service of God in the sanctuary, that the very yearning which filled the hearts of earlier exiles has died out; for while they had never ceased to look forward to the time when they should return to Jerusalem to worship there, he never speaks of the Temple as if he were familiar with its walls, content anywhere, either amid his captive brethren or their heathen masters, to praise the Holy One of Israel⁴. Rather have the facts of his own life, the entire impossibility of

¹ XXXV;

XXXVIII;

LXIX; CIX.

² XL; XXXIV;

LI; LXXI.

³ XXV.

⁴ XXXV. 28;

XL. 3 seqq.

LXIX. 29;

LI. 18, 19 note.

fulfilling the service of the written Law forced upon him the lesson that true worship requires only to be offered "in spirit and in truth⁵." Compelled by loss of the outward ritual to rest alone in the inward communion with God, the Psalmist learnt to try his own life by a severer canon, and thus the ideas of sin⁶ and repentance⁷ attained a prominence and vitality, which they never had while the Temple was standing. Thus, while these Psalms have their own value, as throwing light on the feelings of the nation in a dark time, yet above and beyond all this and despite the bitterness of personal feeling⁸ which here and there appears, there may be seen in them the germs of the highest spirituality.

The Psalmist is not a prophet, whose human impulses have been trained by a life of devotion to bend to God: he is much more the man of vehement emotion, incapable of persistent self-control and only at last restored to peace by having learnt to know the spirit of true repentance. The character of his sufferings, the nature of his guilt, and the objects of his aspiration, shew him to have been a man of position in the state, may be a warrior⁹, or even a king. It is this rank that at one time adds bitterness¹⁰ to his degradation, at another gives scope to his passion¹¹, and in his last days allows him to speak¹² as one in authority to the new generation of his countrymen.

He lives to see Jerusalem and the Temple destroyed¹³

⁵ xl. 8—13;
li. 15—17;
lxix. 31, 32.

⁶ li. 5.
⁷ li. 10.

⁸ xxxv. 4—8;
lxix. 23—29;
cix. 5 et seq.

⁹ See the metaphors used
xxxv. 2, 3;
¹⁰ cix. 7, introduction.
¹¹ li. 14.

¹² lxxi. 14—16; li. 13;
xl. 13; xxxiv. 1, 2.

and the cup of his nation's woe filled to overflowing, but time has brought with it mastery over his own soul, and thus, though the prospects of his people are more than ever gloomy, he sees more clearly the light of a coming deliverance¹⁴.

¹⁴ Cp. notes on § 37 Ps. lxxvi; § 63 Ps. lxxii.

§§ 70, 71. PSALMS XXXV, XXXVIII.

THE Psalmist appears from the images¹ used to have met with persecution from powerful warriors and to have fallen into a dangerous sickness²; in the hour of weakness his enemies, and even those whom he had befriended³, glory in his misfortunes, and treat them as a punishment for the crimes of which they falsely accuse him⁴.

¹ XXXV. 1, 2, 3.

² XXXV. 15. Cp. 13. XXXVIII. 3—7.

³ XXXV. 12—14; XXXVIII. 20.

⁴ XXXV. 11.

This persecution is the result of espousing the cause of order⁵ and religion, and the Psalmist in his prostration can see no hope of deliverance unless God shall signally interpose in his behalf⁶.

⁵ XXXV. 20; XXXVIII. 20.

⁶ XXXV. 1, 23; XXXVIII. 15, 21.

§ 70. PSALM XXXV.

I.

The Psalmist prayeth God to do battle against his enemies.

Strive Thou, O Jehovah, with them that strive with me,	1
fight Thou against them that fight against me;	
lay hand upon the shield and buckler,	2
and stand up to help me,	

bring forth the spear and battle-axe against them that persecute
me, 3
say to my soul, I am thy help !
let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my
life, 4
let them be turned back and put to confusion that imagine
mischief for me !
let them be as chaff before the wind, 5
and the angel of Jehovah scattering them ;
let their way be dark and slippery, 6
and let the angel of Jehovah pursue them ;
for without cause have they hid their net in a pit for me, 7
without cause have they dug a pit for my life ;
let destruction come upon him unawares, 8
let his net that he hath laid privily catch himself,
that he may fall into his own pit ;
and my soul shall be joyful in Jehovah, 9
it shall rejoice in His salvation ;
all my bones shall say, 'Jehovah, who is like unto Thee, 10
'Who delivereth the poor from him that is too strong for him,
'the poor and the needy from him that spoileth them?'

II.

He justifieth his prayer by describing the deceit and ingratitude of his enemies,

False witnesses do rise up ; 11
they lay to my charge things that I know not ;
they requite me evil for good, 12
to the great discomfort of my soul !
Nevertheless when they were sick, I put on sackcloth, 13
and humbled my soul with fasting,
and my prayer fell upon my bosom ;

I behaved myself as though it had been my friend or my brother;
14

I went heavily as one that mourneth for his mother;
but in mine adversity they rejoice and gather themselves together,
15

yea they bring scourges against me and I know it not;
they revile me and cease not;
with shameless mockings, full of lies,
16
they gnash upon me with their teeth.

and again breaketh into prayer,

Lord! how long wilt Thou look upon this?
17

O deliver my soul from their pitfalls,
my darling from the lions;
so will I give thee thanks in the great congregation,
18

I will praise thee among much people;
O let not my lying enemies triumph over me,
19
neither let them wink with their eyes that hate me without
a cause.

III.

shewing his common cause with the good.

And why? their communing is not for peace,
20
but they imagine deceit for them that are quiet in the land;
they gape upon me with their mouths,
21

and say, 'fie on thee, fie on thee!

we saw it with our eyes.'

Thou hast seen it, O Jehovah; hold not Thy tongue;
22
be not far from me, O Lord;

awake and stand up to judge my quarrel,
23
even for my cause, my God and my Lord;

judge me, Jehovah my God, according to Thy righteousness, 24
 and let them not triumph over me ;
 let them not say in their hearts, 'there, there, so would we
 have it ;' 25
 neither let them say, 'we have devoured him :'
 let them be put to confusion and shame together that rejoice
 at my trouble ; 26
 let them be clothed with rebuke and dishonour that boast
 themselves against me ;
 let them be glad and rejoice that favour my salvation ; 27
 yea, let them say alway, 'blessed be Jehovah,
 Who hath pleasure in the prosperity of His servant ;'
 and my tongue shall sing of Thy salvation, 28
 and of Thy praise all the day long !

Ver. 4. This verse, which makes the first strophe longer than the two succeeding, may have been inserted here from § 72 Ps. xl. 17, where it also occurs.

Ver. 8. *him*. The change from the plural to the singular shews the concentration of personal feeling against the leader of his enemies.

Ver. 11. They demand satisfaction at his hands for injuries said to have been inflicted by him, of which he has never even heard.

Ver. 13. *my prayer*, *i.e.* while he prayed, his sorrow was so great that he could not lift his head from his bosom. Cp. 1 Kings xviii. 42, where Elijah, when praying, "put his face between his knees."

Ver. 15. *in mine adversity*, that is, 'when I fell ill.'
scourges, that is, the scourges of pitiless and reviling tongues ; cp. Job v. 21: "the scourge of the tongue." and *I know it not*, *i.e.* I am innocent.

Ver. 16. *deceit*. Lit. 'crookedness,' that is, 'intentional distortion of the truth.'

Ver. 17. *darting*. Cp. § 69 xxii. 20 and note.

Ver. 21. *saw it*, *i.e.* saw the Psalmist struck down with sickness.

Ver. 22. A quick transition. If his enemies have seen his fall and rejoiced over it, there is another, even God, who has seen their malicious exultation.

§ 71. PSALM XXXVIII.

I.

The Psalmist in sickness prayeth for the mitigation of his punishment.

Put me not to rebuke, O Jehovah, in Thine anger, 1
 neither chasten me in Thy heavy displeasure !
 for Thine arrows stick fast in me, 2
 and Thine hand presseth me sore ;
 there is no health in my flesh, because of Thy displeasure, 3
 neither is there any rest in my bones by reason of my sin :
 for my punishments are gone over my head, 4
 and are like a sore burden, too heavy for me to bear ;
 my wounds stink and are corrupt, 5
 through my foolishness ;
 I am bowed down and brought very low, 6
 I go mourning all the day long ;
 for my loins are filled with a sore disease, 7
 and there is no whole part in my body ;
 I am feeble and sore smitten, 8
 I have roared for the very disquietness of my heart.

II.

He calleth God to witness his patience in pain, desertion and danger.

Lord, Thou knowest all my desire, 9
 my groaning is not hid from Thee ;
 my heart panteth, my strength hath failed me, 10
 and the sight of mine eyes is gone from me :
 my friends and my neighbours stand looking on my trouble, 11
 and my kinsmen stand afar off ;

they that seek my life lay snares for me ; 12
they that go about to do me evil talk of destruction,
and imagine deceit all the day long.
As for me I am like a deaf man and hear not, 13
and as one that is dumb who doth not open his mouth ;
I am become even as a man that heareth not, 14
and in whose mouth are no reproofs,
for in Thee, O Jehovah, do I put my trust ; 15
Thou wilt hear me, O Lord, my God !

III.

*He recalleth how his fall would rejoice the enemies of God,
and confessing his guilt prayeth for help.*

For I said within myself, 'O that they should not triumph over
me, 16
and when my foot slippeth, rejoice greatly against me ;'
for truly I am nigh unto falling, 17
and my heaviness is ever before me,
for I confess my wickedness, 18
and am sorry for my sin.
But they that are mine enemies without cause are multiplied, 19
and they that hate me wrongfully are many in number ;
they also who requite me evil for good are against me, 20
because I follow the thing that good is.
Forsake me not, O Jehovah, 21
my God, be not Thou far from me !
Haste Thee to help me, 22
O Lord, my salvation !

§ 72. PSALM XL (INCLUDING LXX).

THIS Psalm consists of two parts¹, between which the connexion of thought is not very apparent; for, instead of the usual² order, in which a prayer at the commencement of the Psalm is followed by a song of praise or thanksgiving at its close, we have here first a thanksgiving for deliverance³, and then a prayer for help⁴.

It would seem that the Psalmist, beset with peril⁵, is naturally reminded how he had once been in like danger before⁶ and had then been delivered; he rises in his second hour of need above the extremity of despair; he can at all times recall the joyful feelings with which he had before given thanks to God, and even dwell on the very words⁷ of his thanksgiving, and on the symbolical act⁸ by which he had declared his thankfulness. But his heart has been enlarged by this experience; he has seen that God's ways are higher than His people thought, and that God is not a being to be appeased by vows of sacrifice⁹, but One who will hear the prayer of those who vow obedience to the spirit of His Law.

¹ 1st part, vv. 1—13;² 2nd part, vv. 14—21.³ See §§ 57 Ps. xxxi. and others.³ vv. 1, 2, 3.⁴ vv. 14, 16, 21.⁵ vv. 16, 21.⁶ v. 2.⁷ 2nd line of v. 3; vv. 5—7.⁸ v. 10.⁹ v. 8.

I.

The Psalmist's former experience of God;

I waited patiently for Jehovah, 1
and He inclined unto me and heard my calling ;
He brought me out of the horrible pit, out of the mire and
clay, 2
and set my feet upon the rock and established my going ;
and He put a new song in my mouth, 3
a thanksgiving to our God,
that many might see this and fear, 4
and put their trust in Jehovah ;
'Blessed is the man that hath set his hope in Jehovah, 5
and turned not unto the proud, and to such as go about
with lies !
Jehovah, O my God, manifold are the wondrous works, that
Thou hast done, 6
like as be also Thy thoughts that are to us ward,
there is nothing that can be compared with Thee !
if I should declare, and speak of them, 7
they should be more than I am able to express.'

II.

his consequent enlightenment in God's law ; his vow of obedience,

Sacrifice and meat-offering Thou wouldest not ; 8
mine ear hadst Thou opened :
burnt offerings and sacrifice for sin didst Thou not require, 9
then said I, 'lo, I come

with the roll of the book, that is written for me ; 10
I am content to do Thy will, O my God,
yea, 'Thy law is within my heart !'
I have declared Thy gracious dealing in the great congregation, 11
yea, I have not refrained my lips,
O Jehovah, and that Thou knowest !
I have not hid Thy righteousness within my heart ; 12
my talk hath been of Thy truth and of Thy salvation ;
I have not kept back Thy loving mercy and truth from
the great congregation. 13

III.

He now appeals for a renewal of God's help

'Thou, O Jehovah, wilt not withdraw Thy mercy from me, 14
'Thy loving-kindness and truth always preserve me !
For innumerable troubles are come about me, 15
my chastisements are upon me, I am not able to look up ;
yea, they are more in number than the hairs of my head,
and my heart hath failed me.

IV.

O Jehovah, let it be Thy pleasure to deliver me, 16
make haste, O Jehovah, to help me !
Let them be ashamed and confounded together, 17
that seek after my soul to destroy it ;
let them be driven backward and put to rebuke,
that wish me evil !
let them be confounded and rewarded with shame, 18
that say unto me, "fie upon thee, fie upon thee !"

let all such as seek Thee be joyful and glad in Thee, 19
 and let such as love Thy salvation say always, "Jehovah
 be praised!"

As for me, I am poor and helpless; haste Thee to help me,
 O Lord, 20
 Thou art my trust and my redeemer; 21
 make no long tarrying, O my God!

Ver. 2. The allusion is to a dungeon similar to that in which Jeremiah was confined: see Jer. xxxviii. 6, 'and in the dungeon there was no water, but mire; so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.' Cp. § 73 Ps. lxi. 2.

Ver. 3. The Psalmist had before been in trouble, had prayed to God (ver. 2), and been delivered (ver. 3), and here the sentence *he put a new song* is finished with an indirect quotation from the former song of thanksgiving; the words may have run thus,

'Thanks be to our God!
 see this, ye people, and fear,
 and put your trust in Jehovah.'

He then quotes in verses 5—7 the succeeding words of the thanksgiving.

Ver. 8. *opened*. Lit. had bored through his ears, *i.e.* made him who was deaf before, to hear: cp. Ruth iv. 4, 1 Sam. ix. 15, 2 Sam. vii. 27, Is. l. 5. This means, that God by His former dealings, had brought him to a clearer knowledge of His ways.

Ver. 10. *I come with the roll of the book*. Under the image of bringing the roll of the newly found law he expresses his approach to God with the sacrifice not of victims but of an obedient heart. Cp. 1 Sam. xv. 22. The image accords well with the period to which the Psalm has been assigned.

Ver. 17. This verse occurs again § 70 xxxv. 4, where it has possibly been inserted from this Psalm.

PSALM LXX (OR XL. 16—21).

THE fourth strophe of the 40th Psalm is so complete in itself as a prayer that it has been used separately as an independent Psalm, the 70th of the Psalter. For a list of Psalms made up of portions of other Psalms see § 24 Ps. xxvii. note.

§ 73. PSALM LXIX.

THIS Psalm comes from the earlier times of the captivity¹, when the Psalmist by his zeal to maintain in¹ *v.* 34. all purity the religion and service of Jehovah² even after² *v.* 9. the fall of the Temple, was exposed to the scorn heaped on all the worshippers of the God whose Temple had been destroyed. From the images employed it is possible that he had in his own person suffered the horrors of a dungeon, such as is described in the story of Jeremiah³. But the³ *Jer.* xxxviii. height of the Psalmist's suffering is not reached till his enemies break in upon his solitude and seek by false accusations to rob him of all that is left, his good name and self-respect⁴. This last insult forces from him a long and⁴ *v.* 4, 5, 21, terrible imprecation⁵; yet this outburst of human feeling⁵ *v.* 27. 23—29. gives relief; the very vividness of imagination, with which he imprecates their fall, leads by a natural chain of thought to another picture; when the wicked fall, the good will rise⁶, ⁶ *v.* 30—37.

and he already sees in thought the worship of Jehovah restored, and His adherents joining in joy and thanksgiving. Thus the long struggle, begun in bitterness and despair, closes with thoughts of sympathy and hope.

I.

The Psalmist cries for help in persecution

- Save me, O God! 1
for the waters are come in even unto my life,
I stick fast in the deep mire where no ground is; 2
I am come into deep waters,
so that the floods run over me;
I am weary of crying; my throat is dry; 3
my sight faileth me
for waiting so long upon my God;
they that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of
my head, 4
they that would destroy me guiltless are more in number
than my bones;
shall I pay them the things that I never took? 5
- O Lord, Thou knowest my punishment,
and my sufferings are not hid from Thee!
let not them that trust in Thee be ashamed for my cause, 6
O Jehovah God of Hosts;
let not them that seek Thee be confounded through me,
O Thou God of Israel!

II.

for God's cause.

And why! for Thy sake do I suffer reproof, 7
shame hath covered my face ;
I am become a stranger unto my brethren, 8
even an alien unto my mother's children ;
for zeal for Thine house hath even eaten me, 9
and the rebukes of them that rebuke Thee are fallen upon
me ;
I wept and chastened myself with fasting,— 10
and that was turned to my reproof ;
I put on sackcloth also,— 11
and they jested upon me ;
they that sit in the gate sing of me, 12
and the drunkards make songs upon me.

Therefore he prays anew to Him.

But I make my prayer unto Thee, O Jehovah! 13
in an acceptable time, O God, in the multitude of Thy
mercy,
vouchsafe unto me the truth of Thy salvation! 14
take me out of the mire that I sink not, 15
O let me be delivered from them that hate me and out
of deep waters ;
let not the water-flood drown me, 16
neither let the deep swallow me up,
let not the pit shut her mouth upon me!
hear me, O Jehovah, for Thy loving-kindness is comfortable, 17
turn Thee unto me according to the multitude of Thy
mercies ;

and hide not Thy face from Thy servant, 18
for I am in trouble; O haste Thee and hear me;
draw nigh unto my soul and save it, 19
O deliver me, because of mine enemies!

God knoweth how bitter are the mockings of his enemies,

Thou knowest my reproof, my shame, and my dishonour, 20
mine adversaries are all in Thy sight!
rebuke had broken my heart; I was full of heaviness, 21
I looked for some to have pity on me but there was no
man,
neither found I any to comfort me;
they gave me gall in my food, 22
and when I was thirsty they gave me vinegar to drink.

III.

therefore let Him punish them.

Let their table be a snare to take themselves withal, 23
a stumblingblock for them that dwell at ease;
let their eyes be blinded that they see not, 24
and ever bow Thou down their backs;
pour out Thine indignation upon them, 25
and let Thy wrathful displeasure take hold of them;
let their habitation be void, 26
and no man to dwell in their tents!
for they persecute them whom Thou hast smitten, 27
and vex him whom Thou hast wounded;
hold them guilty according to their guilt, 28
and let them not come into Thy mercy;
let them be wiped out of the book of the living, 29
and not be written among the righteous!

Then will prevail the cause of the Psalmist and his fellow sufferers,

As for me, when I am poor and in heaviness,	30
Thy help, O God, shall lift me up!	
I will praise the name of God, with a song,	31
and magnify it with thanksgiving;	
this shall please Jehovah better than an ox,	32
yea than a bullock that hath horns and hoofs!	
The humble shall see this, and be glad;	33
let your heart rejoice, ye that seek after God!	
for Jehovah heareth the poor,	34
He despiseth not His prisoners.	
Let heaven and earth praise Him,	35
the sea and all that moveth therein!	

and the nation will be restored to prosperity.

For God will save Sion and build up the cities of Judah,	36
that men may dwell there and have them in possession!	
the posterity also of Thy servants shall inherit them,	37
they that love Thy name shall dwell therein!	

Ver. 1. Here, as in other passages where the context requires it, *life* may be substituted for 'soul.' Cp. Jer. iv. 10, § 70 Ps. xxxv. 4, § 74 cix. 30, § 76 lxxi. 9, where A.V. uses "soul" for "life" and 1 Sam. xix. 11, Job ii. 6, where "life" is admitted.

Ver. 4. There are two readings here, 1. They that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty; 2. They that are my wrongful enemies are more numerous than my bones. The 2nd has been adopted, retaining the Prayer Book expression *they that would destroy me guiltless*. The number of the human bones was a familiar thought to this Psalmist, cp. § 78 xxxiv. 20, § 70 xxxv. 10, § 29 li. 8.

Ver. 5. *to pay them that I never took, i. e.* under false accusation he is compelled to make restitution for robberies of which he is guiltless. Cp. § 70 xxxv. 11.

punishment, the consequences of his foolishness or sin. Cp. § 71 Ps. xxxviii. 3. As righteousness and blessing are so inseparably connected in the Hebrew mind that the same word may be used for either (cp. § 4 Ps. xxiv. 5 note), so here sin and its consequent suffering. As between God and himself the Psalmist looks upon his sufferings as a punishment for sin, but as between himself and his enemies as a persecution for God's sake; he therefore claims to be relieved.

Ver. 12. *gate*, the place of public resort. Cp. Gen. xix. 1, Ex. xxxii. 26. 2 Sam. iii. 27, Jer. xvii. 19.

Ver. 13. *acceptable time*, *i. e.* the time of God's good pleasure.

Ver. 14. *truth*, *i. e.* faithful fulfilment.

Ver. 16. *pit*. Cp. ver. 2 and § 72 xl. 2 and note.

Ver. 22. *they gave me*, *i. e.* when I looked for sympathy, I found mockery.

gall. By this word the A.V. denotes some bitter and poisonous herb, which cannot be exactly identified; in Hos. x. 4 the same word is translated "hemlock."

Ver. 23. *table*. Cp. Is. xxi. 5. He prays that his persecutors may be ruined by their luxury, the thought of which appears suggested by his own want (ver. 22).

§ 74. PSALM CIX.

THE time of persecution has tried the adherents of Jehovah. Some have yielded to the pressure of their heathen lords and have turned with the animosity of renegades upon their former brethren; others like the Psalmist have had their devotion intensified by persecution. Bitter then is the spirit of the Psalmist, when one who had been his friend turns round on him as an accuser¹, drags him as a criminal before a heathen king², as if it were the Psalmist and not he who had lost his sense of right; and bitterly does he call down on his enemy's head the counterpart of his own suffering³—false accusation, loss of position, and ruin of all his hopes.

¹ 27. 1, 3.

² 27. 30 with 27. 5.

³ 27. 5 et seq.: his own suffering³—false accusation, loss of position, and
see 27. 16; 27.

7.

I.

The Psalmist in persecution

Hold not Thy tongue, O God of my praise! 1
 for the mouth of the ungodly and deceitful is opened upon me,
 they have spoken against me with false tongues, 2
 they compassed me about also with words of hatred,
 and fought against me without a cause;
 for the love that I had unto them, lo they take now my contrary
 part, 3
 but I give myself unto prayer;
 thus have they rewarded me evil for good, 4
 and hatred for my goodwill.

prayeth God to requite his enemies

Set Thou an ungodly man to be ruler over him, 5
 and let an adversary stand at his right hand;
 when sentence is given upon him, let him be condemned, 6
 and let his prayer be turned into sin!
 let his days be few, 7
 let another take his office;
 let his children be fatherless, 8
 and his wife a widow,
 let his children be vagabonds and beg their bread, 9
 yea let them seek it from their desolate homes!

II.

Let the extortioner consume all that he hath, 10
 and let the stranger spoil his labour;
 let there be no man to have pity on him, 11
 nor to have compassion upon his fatherless children;
 let his posterity be destroyed, 12
 and in the next generation let his name be clean put out;

let the wickedness of his fathers be had in remembrance in the
sight of Jehovah, 13

and let not the sin of his mother be done away ;
let them be alway before Jehovah, 14
that He may root out the memorial of them from off the
earth !

for their treachery,

And that because his mind was not to do good, 15
but he persecuted the poor and helpless man,
and him that was vexed at the heart, that he might destroy
him ;

his delight was in cursing,—and it happeneth unto him ; 16
he loved not blessing,—and it is far from him ;
he clothed himself with cursing like as with a raiment, 17
therefore doth it come into his bowels like water,
and like oil into his bones ;

let it be unto him as the cloke that he hath upon him, 18
and as the girdle that he is alway girded withal !

let it thus happen from Jehovah unto mine enemies, 19
and to those that speak evil against my soul !

III.

and to have mercy on him for his fidelity :

But do Thou, O Lord Jehovah, deal with me according to Thy
name ; 20

deliver me, for Thy mercy is sweet !
for I am helpless and poor, 21
and my heart is wounded within me ;

I am gone like the shadow that departeth, 22
and am driven away as the grasshopper ;

my knees are weak through fasting, 23
my flesh is dried up for want of fatness,

for I became a reproach unto them, 24
when they looked upon me they shook their heads.

Help me, Jehovah, O my God, 25

save me according to Thy mercy,
and they shall know how that this is Thy hand, 26

and that Thou, Jehovah, hast done it!

Though they curse, yet Thou shalt bless,— 27

though they rise up against me, they shall be ashamed,

but Thy servant shall rejoice;

let mine adversaries be clothed with shame, 28

let them cover themselves with their own confusion as with
a cloke!

IV.

he rejoiceth in God.

As for me, let me give thanks unto Jehovah, with my mouth, 29
and praise Him among the multitude,

for He standeth at the right hand of the poor, 30
to save him from them that judge his life.

Ver. 5. *an adversary*. The accuser had the right hand assigned to him, so that all his suggestions might be heard. See Zech. iii. 1. So in ver. 30, the constant readiness of God to help is expressed by His standing at the right hand of the helpless.

Ver. 10. *stranger*. Cp. Is. v. 17.

Ver. 22. *that departeth*, lit. when it departeth. The Psalmist is compared to a shadow, which is on the point to fade away. Cp. § 79 Ps. cii. 11, § 142 cxliv. 4, and § 34 Ps. xc. 4 note.

Vv. 27—30. For the sequence of thought at the close of the Psalm, as exemplifying this Psalmist's common mode of treating the subject, see Introduction to § 73 Psalm lxix.

§ 75. PSALM LI.

AT the time when this Psalm is written, the rites of the ceremonial law, while still suggesting the metaphors
¹ *Isa.* 2, 7, 17. of the Psalmist¹, have fallen into abeyance, for the city and
² *Isa.* 18, 19. the Temple have been overthrown².

³ *Isa.* 2, 14. The Psalmist has been guilty of a great crime³; the use of the words 'blood-guiltiness' and 'hyssop' suggests the idea that he might have taken a murderous vengeance on one of his enemies. But now that the passionate impulse is satisfied, the full sense of estrangement from God enters his soul; and in this Psalm are set forth the thoughts with which in the first burst of repentance he seeks to renew communion with God.

The feelings expressed are not such as are natural to a ceremonial religion in the time of its vigorous life, still less in its period of dead formalism; they contain too
⁴ *Isa.* 4, 5. subtle a conception of the nature of sin⁴, too earnest a
⁵ *Isa.* 7, 17. desire for spiritual purification⁵. They may be well contrasted with the simple, natural thoughts in which a similar
⁶ § 13 Ps. subject has been treated in an earlier Psalm⁶.
 xxxii.

As the Psalmist ponders on his misery, he learns that its severity is due not to the actual misdeed that he has committed, but to the sinfulness of heart which alone could betray him into so great a crime. This sinfulness it is that
⁷ *Isa.* 4. has brought on him⁷ the sentence of alienation from God

as the just punishment of his guilt. The crime may be atoned for by a public penance; not so the tendency to sin; this is from within and not from without, and can only be removed by an inner cleansing and by the renewal of the spirit of God. Yet even in dwelling on the inherited⁸ ^{8 v. 5.} wickedness of his nature and confessing his estrangement from God, he gains comfort from the thought that God is using this very corruption of his nature to reconcile him to Himself⁹. In this view the consequences of the sin have⁹ ^{9 v. 7.} been so entirely the spiritual advance of the Psalmist, that he cannot help looking back upon the sin itself as designed¹⁰ ^{10 v. 4 and note.} by God to vindicate His mercy in performing the highest office of a judge,—the passing such a sentence as shall lead to the reformation of the offender. The experience of the Psalmist is no unreality: it has often happened that from an actual fall a man has risen to a higher life; conscience stung by shame at the depth of the fall makes him restless and dissatisfied with his life hitherto, however outwardly respectable and decorous. In this sense of God's mercy the Psalmist would fain thank God publicly for releasing him from the bondage of sin; but he has learnt that in good and in evil alike the will and not the deed is accounted in God's sight¹¹. So, though the Temple can no longer¹¹ ^{11 vv. 17, 18.} receive his burnt offering, yet he feels assured that the incense of a thankful spirit, though neither offered in the hallowed place nor accompanied by outward symbol, has not gone up in vain to the throne of God.

I.

The Psalmist professeth his repentance and asketh for mercy :

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy great goodness; 1
according to the multitude of Thy mercies do away mine offences ;
wash me throughly from my wickedness, 2
and cleanse me from my sin !
for I acknowledge my faults, 3
and my sin is ever before me ;
against Thee only have I sinned, 4
and done this evil in Thy sight,
that Thou mightest be righteous in Thy sentence,
and clear when Thou art judge.

II.

he pleadeth the sinfulness of his nature :

Behold, I was shapen in wickedness, 5
and in sin hath my mother conceived me :
but lo, Thou requirest truth in the inward parts, 6
and shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly ;
Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean, 7
Thou shalt wash me and I shall be whiter than snow :
Thou shalt make me hear of joy and gladness, 8
that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice.

III.

and prayeth for God's spirit,

Turn Thy face from my sins, 9
and put out all my misdeeds ;

make me a clean heart, O God, 10
 and renew a right spirit within me ;
 cast me not away from Thy presence, 11
 and take not Thy holy spirit from me.
 O give me the comfort of Thy help again, 12
 and stablish me with Thy free spirit !

IV.

by whose guidance he will pay the true sacrifice of praise :

Then shall I teach Thy ways unto the wicked, 13
 and sinners shall be converted unto Thee ;
 deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, Thou God of my sal-
 vation, 14
 and my tongue shall sing of Thy righteousness.
 Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord, 15
 and my mouth shall shew Thy praise ;
 for Thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it Thee, 16
 Thou delightest not in burnt-offerings ;
 the sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit, 17
 a broken and a contrite heart, O God, shalt Thou not despise.

V.

and when the Temple is restored, will there repeat his thanksgiving.

O be favourable and gracious unto Sion, 18
 build Thou the walls of Jerusalem !
 Then shalt Thou be pleased with the sacrifice of righteousness, 19
 with burnt-offerings and oblations,
 then shall they offer young bullocks upon Thine altar.

Ver. 4. *against Thee*. It appears from the Psalm (vv. 2, 14), that the Psalmist has been guilty of some crime against a particular man. In what sense then can he say that he has sinned only against God? The Psalmist looks beyond the actual crime to the cause from which it sprung, his own sinful nature. So far does the cause outweigh the act in importance, that he loses sight of the offence against man. Some recompence or some ceremonial purification may restore him to his place among his fellow-men; but his estrangement from God will last as long as its cause remains, that is, till the sinner honestly acknowledges his sinfulness, and renews his relation with his God. Cp. § 71 Ps. xxxviii. 18, Isaiah lix. 12, Amos v. 21.

that, i. e. in order that. It seems hard at first to suppose it to be meant that God intended that the Psalmist should sin for His own good purposes. But the idea is not uncommon in the Old Testament: to the Jews God was the ruler by whose fiat each event took place: without His consent Satan could not tempt Job (cp. Job i. 12): without Him the heart of Pharaoh could not be hardened to refuse to let the children of Israel go (cp. Ex. iv. 21), or that of Sihon to oppose their march (cp. Deut. ii. 30); and in this view the Psalmist could say that God made him to sin.

sentence, i. e. the punishment of his sin, alienation from God.

Ver. 5. *behold*. This verse expresses the truth that in every human being there exists through the very conditions of his nature an hereditary germ of future sin. Cp. Job xiv. 4, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." Cp. Job v. 6, 7.

Ver. 6. *secretly, i. e.* in the hidden chambers of the heart.

Ver. 7. *hyssop*. According to Numb. xix. 16, 17, 18 in the case of a man rendered unclean from touching a dead body, hyssop was to be dipped in water containing the ashes of the red heifer and sprinkled over the unclean person.

Ver. 17. Cp. § 15 Ps. iv. 5.

Ver. 18. The connexion between the two last verses and the rest of the Psalm is not obvious. As we have seen from § 72 Ps. xl. 8, 9; § 73 lxix. 31, 32; and Introduction to §§ 70—78, the idea that the outward act can be dispensed with so long as the will be there is not strange to this time; but why then does the Psalmist recur to the thought of ceremonial sacrifice? The thought seems to be that though the Psalmist yields to the force of circumstances, and submits to the fact that he cannot offer his thanksgiving publicly in these troublous times, yet he has no intention of abusing the law of liberty by neglecting, when Sion shall have been restored, to join his private gratitude to the public thanksgiving.

§ 76. PSALM LXXI.

THE Psalmist speaks the language of the exile ; at the close of a life of varied fortune¹ he is threatened ^{1 v. 18.} with violence from his enemies². Yet in this new danger ^{2 v. 9.} so clear is his recollection of past deliverances, so entire his resignation to God's will, that the thought of his peril is almost lost in a continuous stream of thanksgiving. The Psalm gives a noble picture of a mind, trained by the past to calm trust in God and able in the infirmity of age to face untroubled the prospect of a violent end.

I.

The Psalmist's call to God for His protection of old;

In Thee, O Jehovah, have I put my trust,	1
let me never be put to confusion !	
but rid me and deliver me in Thy righteousness,	
incline Thine ear unto me and save me !	
be 'Thou my stronghold whereunto I may alway resort,	2
Thou hast given commandment to save me,	
for Thou art my strong rock and my castle !	
Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the ungodly,	3
out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man !	
for Thou, O Lord Jehovah, art the thing that I long for,	4
Thou art my hope even from my youth ;	

through Thee have I been holden up ever since I was born, 5
Thou art He that hath blessed me from my mother's womb,
my praise shall be always of Thee.
I am become as it were a monster unto many, 6
but my sure trust is in Thee ;
my mouth is filled with Thy praise, 7
and with Thy glory all the day long ;
cast me not away in the time of age, 8
forsake me not when my strength faileth me.

II.

he describeth his need his patience and his thankfulness ;

Mine enemies spake against me, 9
they that lay wait for my life took counsel together,
saying, 'God has forsaken him ;
persecute him and take him, for there is none to deliver
him :'
—go not far from me, O God, 10
my God, haste Thee to help me !
let them be confounded and perish that are against my soul, 11
let them be covered with shame and dishonour that seek
to do me evil !—
but, as for me, I will patiently abide away, 12
and will praise Thee more and more ;
my mouth shall speak of Thy righteousness, 13
and of Thy salvation every day ;
for I know no end thereof !
I will come with the mighty acts of the Lord Jehovah, 14
and will make mention of Thy goodness only.
Thou, O God, hast taught me from my youth up, 15
I have ever been telling of Thy wondrous works ;

forsake me not, O God, even in mine old age when I am grey-headed,
 16
 until I have shewed Thy strength unto this generation,
 and Thy power to all them that are yet for to come!

III.

he appealeth to the divine righteousness and maketh a vow of praise.

As Thy righteousness, O God, is very high, 17
 and great are the things that Thou hast done,—
 O God, who is like unto Thee?
 O what great troubles and adversities hast Thou shewed us! 18
 and yet wilt Thou turn and refresh us,
 yea and bring us from the deep of the earth again!—
 if Thou shalt bring me to great honour, 19
 and comfort me on every side,
 so will I praise Thee and Thy faithfulness, 20
 O God, upon the lute;
 unto Thee will I sing upon the harp, O Thou Holy One of
 Israel!
 my lips rejoice, yea, I sing unto Thee, 21
 and so doth my soul whom Thou hast delivered!
 my tongue also shall talk of Thy righteousness all the day
 long, 22
 for they are confounded and brought to shame that seek
 to do me evil!

Ver. 2. Verses 1, 2 are taken with slight alteration from § 57 Ps. xxxi,
 1—3.

Ver. 5. Cp. § 69 xxii. 9, 10.

Ver. 6. *monster*. So unnatural and incredible have been his sufferings that he is looked on as a prodigy.

Ver. 8. *cast*. Cp. § 75 Psalm li. 11.

Ver. 14. *I will come with, i.e.* I will bring as an offering to Thee. Cp. § 72 Ps. xl. 9, 10, "then said I, lo I come with the roll of the book, that is written for me," and note.

Ver. 17. He maketh his vow (*v.* 20) that in expectation of deliverance he will ever praise God, by the two attributes of God, which can aid him in his present distress, viz. His righteousness and greatness.

Ver. 18. *us, i.e.* the Psalmist and his people; at this time the individuality of the Psalmist is becoming more and more merged in the common nationality.

§§ 77, 78. PSALMS XXV, XXXIV.

¹ On Alphabetical Psalms, see § 130. Introduction to Psalm cxix.

THESE two Psalms are didactic poems, marked by a peculiar alphabetical arrangement¹; the sixth letter of the Hebrew alphabet is omitted in both and the full number of 22 verses made up by the repetition of the 18th letter at the end.

§ 77. PSALM XXV.

I.

A declaration of God's goodness to the holy and a prayer for growth in holiness.

After Thee, O Jehovah, 1
 doth my soul seek, O my God!
Behold, in Thee is my trust, let me not be confounded,
 neither let mine enemies triumph over me!
Confounded are they that transgress without a cause, 2
 but they that hope in Thee shall never be ashamed!
Direct me in Thy ways, O Jehovah, 3
 and teach me Thy statutes!

Exercise me in Thy truth, for Thou art the God of my salvation, 4
in Thee hath been my hope all the day long!
Forget not, O Jehovah, Thy tender mercies 5
and Thy loving-kindnesses which have been ever of old!
Hold not the sins of my youth in remembrance, O Jehovah. 6
but in Thy mercy think Thou upon me, for Thy goodness!
In Jehovah is mercy and goodness, 7
therefore will He teach sinners in the way;
Jehovah guideth the poor in judgment, 8
such as are gentle, them shall He learn His way;
Loving-kindness and truth are in all His ways, 9
unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies;
Merciful be Thou, O Jehovah, for Thy name's sake, 10
unto my sin, for it is great!

II.

Note thou the man that trusteth in Jehovah, 11
him doth He teach the way that he should choose;
Only he shall dwell at ease; 12
his seed shall inherit the land.
Plain is the secret of Jehovah to them that fear Him; 13
and His covenant is to teach them;
Raised are mine eyes unto Jehovah, 14
for He shall pluck my feet out of the net;
Send help unto me and have mercy upon me, 15
for I am desolate and in misery!
Troubles have taken hold of me; O set me at large, 16
and bring Thou me out of my sorrows;
Unto my adversity and misery turn Thou Thine eyes, 17
and forgive me all my sin!

Verily, many are they that are mine enemies, 18
and they bear a tyrannous hate against me;
Watch Thou over my soul and deliver me; 19
let me not be confounded, for I have put my trust in Thee!
Yea, let perfectness and righteous dealing wait upon me; 20
for my hope hath been in Thee!
Save Israel, O God, 21
out of all his troubles!

§ 78. PSALM XXXIV.

An exhortation to praise God for His mercies.

Alway will I give thanks unto Jehovah, 1
and His praise shall be ever in my mouth!
Boast thou in Jehovah, O my soul, 2
for the humble shall hear thereof and be glad!
Come with me and praise Jehovah, 3
let us magnify His name together!
Diligently I sought Jehovah and He heard me; 4
yea, He delivered me out of all my fear.
Enlightened are all they that have an eye unto Him; 5
their faces are not ashamed.
For lo! the poor cried and Jehovah heard him, 6
yea, and saved him out of all his troubles.
Help cometh from Jehovah to them that fear Him, 7
for His angel campeth round about them.
Jehovah is gracious; O taste and see, 8
how blessed is the man that trusteth in Him.
Keepest the fear of Jehovah, ye that are His saints, 9
for they that fear Him lack nothing.
Lions do lack and suffer hunger, 10
but they that seek Jehovah want not anything that is good.

- M**y children, hearken unto me, 11
 I will teach you the fear of Jehovah.
Needs must the man that lusteth to live 12
 and would fain see good days,
Orders his tongue from evil, 13
 and his lips that they speak no guile.
Put away evil and do good, 14
 seek peace and ensue it.
Righteous men are in the sight of Jehovah, 15
 and His ears are open unto their prayers.
Set against the wicked is the face of Jehovah, 16
 to root out the remembrance of them from the earth.
The righteous cried and Jehovah heard them, 17
 and delivered them out of all their troubles;
Unto them that are of a contrite heart Jehovah is nigh, 18
 and saveth such as be of an humble spirit.
Verily, many are the troubles of the righteous, 19
 but Jehovah delivereth him out of all.
Watched of Him are all his bones, 20
 so that not one of them is broken.
Yet misfortune slayeth the ungodly, 21
 and they that hate the righteous are desolate.
Salvation cometh from Jehovah to the souls of His servants, 22
 all they that put their trust in Him shall not be destitute.

Ver. 6. *the poor, i. e.* the Psalmist.

Ver. 7. In imitation of the original, a letter has been omitted: see Introduction; the number of verses is made up by the repetition at the end of the same letter as that with which the 16th verse began.

§ 79. PSALM CII.

¹ 7. 14. Cp.
Lam. iv. 1, 2.

AS the Psalmist lingered fondly amid the ruins¹ of his city, he would be led to contrast the perishable things around with the imperishable nature of God. The thought of God's eternity² leads him to feel that His promises cannot fail and to picture the prostrate Sion rising as the Queen of a converted world³.

² 27. 15, 22,
28, and cp.
§ 63 note.

The prayer of the afflicted, when he is faint,
and poureth forth his sighing unto Jehovah ;

I.

Hear my prayer, O Jehovah,	1
and let my crying come unto Thee !	
hide not Thy face from me in the time of my trouble,	2
incline Thine ear unto me when I call ;	
O hear me and that right soon !	
for my days are consumed away like smoke, -	3
and my bones are burnt up like a firebrand,	
my heart is smitten down and withered like grass,	4
so that I forget to eat my bread ;	
because of the voice of my groaning	5
my bones cleave unto my flesh,	
I am become like the pelican in the wilderness,	6
and like the owl that is in the desert,	
I sleep not and am become like a sparrow,	7
that sitteth alone upon the house-top ;	
mine enemies revile me all the day long,	8
and they that are mad upon me make my name a curse.	

II.

For I have eaten ashes as it were bread, 9
 and mingled my drink with weeping;
 and that, because of Thine indignation and wrath, 10
 for Thou hast taken me up and cast me away;
 my days are like a shadow that declineth, 11
 and I am withered like grass.
 But Thy throne, O Jehovah, is established for ever, 12
 and Thy remembrance unto all generations;
 Thou wilt arise and have mercy upon Sion, 13
 —for it is time that Thou be gracious unto her,
 yea, the time is come;
 and why? Thy servants take pleasure even in her stones, 14
 and it pitieth them to see her in the dust;—
 so shall the heathen fear the name of Jehovah, 15
 and all the kings of the earth Thy majesty.

III.

For 'Jehovah hath built up Sion, 16
 and hath made His glory to appear;
 hath turned Him to the prayer of the poor destitute, 17
 and despised not their desire.'
 Let this be written by those that come after! 18
 and let the people that shall be born praise Jehovah,
 for He hath looked down from the height of His sanctuary, 19
 out of the heaven did Jehovah behold the earth,
 that He might hear the mourning of such as are in captivity, 20
 and deliver the children appointed unto death,
 that they may declare the name of Jehovah in Sion, 21
 and His praise in Jerusalem,
 when the nations are gathered together, 22
 and the kingdoms to serve Jehovah.

IV.

The Psalmist is comforted by the thought of the eternity of God.

He brought down my strength in my journey, 23
 He shortened my days;
 then I said; 'O my God, take me not away in the midst
 of mine age; 24
 as for Thy years, they endure throughout all generations!
 Thou in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, 25
 and the heavens are the work of Thy hands;
 they shall perish but Thou shalt endure, 26
 they all shall wax old as doth a garment,
 and as a vesture shalt Thou change them and they shall be
 changed, 27
 but Thou art the same,
 and Thy years shall not fail.
 The children of Thy servants shall continue, 28
 and their seed shall stand fast in Thy sight.'

The superscription of this Psalm differs in style from that of any other, and may best be compared with Hab. iii. 1. See Appendix B. It seems to be written by the Psalmist himself and is therefore included in the Psalm.

Ver. 4. His sorrow is so great that he cannot eat. Cp. 1 Sam. i. 7; 2 Sam. xii. 17, 21.

Ver. 5. *cleave*. For this sign of extreme emaciation, cp. Job xix. 20, "My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh."

Ver. 8. *curse*, that is, use my name as a proverb in their oaths. Cp. Is. lxx. 15; Numb. v. 21; Zech. viii. 13; Jer. xxix. 22, "And of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of Judah which are in Babylon, saying, The Lord make thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire."

Ver. 10. *cast me away*. The metaphor is the same as in Is. xxii. 17, 18, the Psalmist is lifted up on high and then tossed away like a ball.

Ver. 11. Cp. § 74 cix. 22, and note.

Ver. 15. For the amplification of this hope, which was intensified after the captivity, see Zech. xiv. 9, 16, and § 63 Ps. lxxii. note.

Ver. 18. *this, i. e.* the quotation of the thanksgiving contained in the two preceding verses.

Ver. 20. *children appointed unto death*, lit. children of death, that is, the dying.

Ver. 23. *journey, i. e.* the journey of life.

§§ 80—82. PSALMS LXXIII, LXXVII, XCIV.

THE prolonged duration of the Captivity naturally increased the depression of the faithful Israelites, but at the same time they learnt more and more to rest on the consolatory belief that temporary misfortune was no proof of final rejection, that there are blessings to be won from chastisement, and that in His own time God would deliver them once again, as He had delivered them from Egypt of yore¹.

¹ lxxvii. 5,
11—20.

This struggle between despair and hope is strikingly depicted in the three following Psalms. The Psalmist, unlightened by any clear prospect of a future life, in which the manifold inequalities of the present might be redressed, and sorely perplexed² by that dark enigma, the prosperity of the wicked, yet feels his way to a discernment of the truth, that while the success of evil is apparent and momentary³, the triumph of good is real and final; he even catches a glimpse of the still higher truth, revealed in the pages of Job, that communion with God is a blessing higher than happiness and that the consciousness of possessing this gives a joy with which the pleasures of mere temporal prosperity are wholly incommensurable⁴.

² lxxiii. 2—5,
20, 21 ;
lxxvii. 3, 4.

³ lxxiii. 17,
18, 19.

⁴ Cp. lxxiii.
24, 25, with
Job xxviii.
12—26.

§ 80. PSALM LXXIII.

Truly God is loving unto Israel, 1
even unto such as are of a clean heart !

I.

The Psalmist confesseth his perplexity at the ill-gotten success of the wicked,

But as for me—my feet were almost gone, 2
my steps had well nigh slipt ;
and why? I was envious at the proud, 3
I did also see the ungodly in such prosperity,
‘how they are in no pain, 4
but their body is lusty and strong,
they come in no misfortune like other folk, 5
neither are they plagued like other men.’

Therefore is their neck so encompassed with pride, 6
and they are clothed with cruelty as with a raiment,
their wickedness overfloweth from the fatness of their heart, 7
they are swollen with their own imaginations,
they scoff, and their talking is of oppression and malice, 8
they talk proudly as from on high,
for they stretch forth their mouth unto heaven, 9
while their tongue goeth through the earth.

which tempteth the faithful to imitate them.

Therefore fall His people unto them, 10
yea, they drink their fill of the cup.

he declareth his unchangeable trust in God's help,

Nevertheless I am alway by Thee! 22
 Thou hast holden me by my right hand,
 Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, 23
 and shalt bring me unto honour.
 Whom have I in heaven but Thee? 24
 and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison
 with Thee!
 my flesh and my heart faileth; 25
 but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for
 ever.

III.

which he hath gained by the revelation of God's dealings.

For lo! they that forsake Thee shall perish,
 Thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from Thee :
 but it is good for me to hold me fast by God : 27
 in the Lord Jehovah do I put my trust,
 that I may speak praises of all Thy works!

Vv. 4, 5. *how they are in no pain*, etc. The abrupt change of tense may be explained by supposing the Psalmist to be quoting the actual words of a previous Psalm, according to a common usage of this period. Cp. § 72 Ps. xl. 5.

Ver. 6. *their neck is encompassed with pride*, as with a necklace, so A.V. 'compasseth them about as a chain.' Cp. also Is. iii. 16, 19.

Ver. 7. Cp. § 64 Ps. xvii. 10. It is this very luxury and prosperity which breeds the proud thoughts of vv. 8, 9.

Ver. 9. The heathen tyrants give their commands to the world, as if they were the gods of it. Compare the magnificent vision of the fall of Babylon, Is. xiv. 12, 13, 14, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the

morning!...thou hast said in thine heart, 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also in the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north (cp. note on § 36 Ps. xlviii. 2): I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High.'"

tongue, i. e. their proud proclamations.

Ver. 10. *Therefore, i. e.* by letting the heathen remain unchecked in their prosperity. *full His people unto them*, or more exactly, 'God alloweth His people to be led' into some temptation.

they drink their fill of the cup, i. e. of the cup of treachery to God, cp. *Christian Year*, 2nd Sunday after Epiph.

Such is the world's gay garish feast,
in her first charming bowl,
infusing all that fires the breast,
and cheats the unstable soul.

Lit. 'they drink water in full (measure).' God's people, tempted by the offer of the prosperity which the godless vaunt as the reward of apostasy, drink in the dangerous doctrines as eagerly as a thirsty traveller would drink water from a well. Cp. Job xv. 16, 'drinketh iniquity like water,' and Prov. iv. 17, xxvi. 6.

Vv. 11—13. The temptation presented in these graphic words to the still faithful Israelite lies in this thought—that he has subjected himself to the discipline of God's Law in vain, if blessings are thus showered on the head of the apostate.

Ver. 14. *I should have betrayed*, etc. by not upholding the faith of a true Israelite, and thereby adding to the temptations of the remnant of the faithful.

Ver. 16. *until I went, i. e.* until I was admitted unto the secret counsels of God's dealings, and learnt that the heathen are only raised to such prosperity, that the example of their final fall may strike more terror into the world.

Ver. 19. Cp. Job xx. 8, 9, "He shall fly away as a dream and shall not be found: yea he shall be chased away as a vision of the night: the eye also which saw him shall see him no more; neither shall his place any more behold him."

at Thy presence, i. e. when Thou arisest in judgment.

Ver. 20. *was grieved, i. e.* at the prosperity of the wicked.

Ver. 21. *foolish*. Cp. § 66 Ps. xlix. "Man in his glory so he have no understanding is like unto the beasts that perish," lack of understanding being equivalent to unfaithfulness to God.

§ 81. PSALM LXXVII.

THE Psalmist depicts the struggle of his life as centred in a single night of anguish¹; he clothes in vivid words the thoughts that thrilled through him, while despair² and hope³ were battling for mastery in his soul, and thus lays the history of his life before us in a dialogue⁴ between his old and his new Self. An abrupt transition⁵ marks the dawn of the new hope, 'What if God be still ruling as before; and His hand be in our captivity now, as in Israel's bondage of yore? What if we too be destined to have as glorious an Exodus as theirs ⁶?' As the weight is taken off the Psalmist's soul, he suddenly becomes a new man; and while apparently engrossed in the past, he is carried away into a song of triumph⁷ which is really an unconscious prophecy of the future.

¹ vv. 2, 6.² vv. 7, 8, 9.³ vv. 10, 11, 12.⁴ See note.⁵ v. 10.⁶ v. 11 and § 114 Ps. lxviii.⁷ vv. 13-20.

I.

The Psalmist quoteth his former expressions of perplexity at God's dealings.

'I will cry unto God with my voice, 1
even unto God will I cry and He shall hearken unto
me.'

In the time of my trouble I sought the Lord, 2
I stretched out my hand and ceased not in the night-season:
my soul refused comfort:

‘when I think upon God, I am in heaviness, 3
 ‘I muse in mine heart and my spirit waxeth faint!’

He describeth his past confusion, and again recalleth his ‘Song of despair,’

Thou didst hold fast mine eyelids, 4

I was troubled and spake nothing,

I considered the days of old, 5

and the years that are past :

‘let me call to remembrance my song in the night 6

‘and commune with mine heart!’

—and my spirit enquired thus within itself :—

‘Will the Lord absent Himself for ever, 7

‘and will He be no more entreated?

‘is His mercy clean gone for ever, 8

‘and His promise come utterly to an end for evermore?

‘hath God forgotten to be gracious, 9

‘will He shut up His lovingkindness in displeasure?’

which the thought of God’s eternity turned into a Psalm of Faith,

Then said I :—‘this is my affliction, 10

‘even during the years of the right hand of the most
 Highest !

‘I will think of the works of Jehovah, 11

‘yea, I will call to mind Thy wonders of old time,

‘I will sing also of all Thy works, 12

‘and my talking shall be of Thy doings.’

II.

*and he breaketh into a hymn of praise for the great deliverance of his nation
 at the Red Sea.*

Thy way, O God, is holy ; 13

who is so great a god as our God?

Thou art the God that doeth wonders, 14
 and hast declared Thy power among the nations;
 'Thou didst mightily deliver Thy people, 15
 even the sons of Jacob and Joseph.

The waters saw Thee, O God, the waters saw Thee and were
 afraid; 16
 the depths also were troubled;
 the clouds poured out water, the air thundered, 17
 and Thine arrows went abroad;
 the voice of Thy thunder was heard in the whirlwind, light-
 nings shone upon the world; 18
 the earth was moved and shook withal.

'Thy way was in the sea, 19
 and Thy paths in the great waters,
 and Thy footsteps were not known,—
 'Thou leddest Thy people like sheep 20
 by the hand of Moses and Aaron!

Note. The structure of this Psalm is very complicated. The 1st and 3rd verses with the first 2 lines of the 6th, and the whole of verses 7 to 12, (except the words 'Then said I' ver. 10) appear to be a quotation from a previous Psalm; with this is interwoven the description of the Psalmist's feelings at the time of composing it. The end of the Psalm (13—20) contains a separate hymn of praise, springing from the words "and my talking shall be of Thy doings" (ver. 12).

Ver. 2. *I stretched out mine hand, i. e.* in entreaty to God. Cp. § 119 Ps. xlv. 20 (A.V.) "if we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to any strange god." Also § 58 Ps. lxxxviii. 9, Job xi. 13, Lam. ii. 18, 19, Exod. xvii. 10.

Ver. 3. *when I think upon God, i. e.* upon His dealings, as yet unintelligible. Cp. § 80 Ps. lxxiii. Introduction.

Ver. 4. *Thou didst hold fast mine eyelids, i. e.* I could not close them in sleep, so perplexed was I.

Ver. 10. *Then said I etc., i. e.* this my suffering lasts, notwithstanding that Jehovah still rules the world. This reminds him of the deeds of the right hand of Jehovah in the time of old and gives him hope of another Exodus across the desert which now divides him from his home.

§ 82. PSALM XCIV.¹¹ Cp. § 80.

I.

A cry for retribution on the oppressor,

O God, Jehovah, to whom vengeance belongeth,	1
Thou God to whom vengeance belongeth, shew Thyself!	
arise, Thou judge of the world,	2
and reward the proud after their deserving!	
How long, O Jehovah, shall the ungodly—	3
how long shall the ungodly triumph?	
how long shall all wicked doers speak so disdainfully,	4
and make such proud boasting?	
they smite down Thy people, O Jehovah,	5
and trouble Thine heritage,	
they murder the widow and the stranger,	6
and put the fatherless to death,	
and yet they say, 'tush, Jehovah shall not see,	7
neither shall the God of Jacob regard it!'	

II.

whom the Psalmist warneth of the folly of trying to escape the eye of God.

'Take heed, ye unwise among the people;	8
O ye fools, when will ye understand?	
He that planted the ear, shall He not hear,	9
or He that made the eye, shall He not see?	

He that chasteneth the nations, shall He not punish, 10
even He that teacheth man knowledge?
Jehovah knoweth the thoughts of man, 11
that they are but vain.
Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, Jehovah, 12
and teachest him in Thy law,
that Thou mayest give him patience in time of adversity, 13
until a pit be digged up for the ungodly!
for Jehovah will not reject His people, 14
neither will He forsake His inheritance;
but judgment shall turn again unto right, 15
and all such as are true of heart shall follow Him.

III.

In remembrance of God's past mercies he declareth his trust in Him for the future

Who will stand up for me against the wicked, 16
who will take my part against the evil-doers?
if Jehovah had not helped me, 17
it had not failed but my soul had gone down into silence:
but when I say, 'my foot hath slipt,' 18
Thy mercy, Jehovah, doth hold me up;
in the multitude of the sorrows that I have in my heart 19
Thy comforts refresh my soul;
shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with Thee, 20
which imagineth mischief as a law?
They gather them together against the soul of the righteous, 21
and condemn the innocent blood,
but Jehovah is my defence, 22
and my God is the rock of my refuge,

and He requiteth them with their own wickedness, 23
and destroyeth them for their malice,
yea, Jehovah our God doth destroy them !

Note. For this Psalm, see Introduction §§ 80—82.

Ver. 30. *throne of iniquity*, an unrighteous judgment-seat, where decisions are regulated by the code of malice, which seeks only the misery of others.

§ 83. PSALM LXXXII.

IN this Psalm are developed more fully the same ideas of which the germ is first seen in the 52nd¹. It is ¹ § 46. conceived in the spirit of prophecy². The Psalmist sees ² See note. not as men see, for his eye is fixed only on the throne of God³. He hears the viceroys or satraps of a vast empire ³ v. 1. claiming, like Rabshakeh of old⁴, the divine attributes of ⁴ 2 Kings xviii. 33, 35. eternity⁵ and omnipotence for their rule, but feels assured ⁵ Cp. v. 6 with v. 7. that the possession of divine justice is the only test of the possession of divine power and that thus by their fruits he may know them ; when tried by this touchstone he sees their gold to be but dross, while the whole fabric of their power is ready to crumble away⁶ at the breath of the dis- ⁶ v. 7. pleasure of God. Thus while they claim reverence for their rights, he reminds them of their duties. He tells them that their exercise of power is corrupt and selfish, and treats their pretensions to divinity with the bitterest irony⁷. They ⁷ Cp. § 53 Ps. lvi. may claim indeed to be gods, but they are gods as perishable as mortals, as powerless as the dumb idols which they boast

⁸ Cp. 2 Kings to have overthrown⁸; and in the grand judgment in which
xix. 18.

the false gods will be brought face to face with the True,
their claims to rule and empire will be thrust aside with
scorn, and their heathen subjects will be called into the

⁹ v. 8. fold of the Shepherd of the world, the God of Israel⁹.

God calleth the rulers of the world to judgment:

God standeth in the congregation of princes,	1
He giveth judgment among gods;	
'how long will ye judge unjustly,	2
and accept the persons of the ungodly?	
defend the poor and fatherless,	3
see that such as are in need and necessity have right,	
deliver the outcast and poor,	4
save them from the hand of the ungodly!	

when they turn a deaf ear to His appeal, He pronounceth final sentence upon them.

They will not be learned nor understand,	5
but walk on still in darkness;	
all the foundations of the world are out of course.	
"I said, 'ye are gods,	6
and ye are all the children of the most Highest;'	
but ye shall die like men,	7
and fall all the sort of ye, O ye princes!"	

The Psalmist prayeth God to execute His sentence.

Arise, O God, and judge Thou the earth!	8
for Thou shalt take all heathen to Thine inheritance!	

Note. This Psalm must be closely compared with the words of the contemporary prophet Ezekiel (xxviii. 2—10).

"Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord God; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, 'I am a god, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas;' yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God;... behold, therefore, I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations; and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness: they shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas. Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, 'I am God'? but thou shalt be a man, and no god in the hand of him that slayeth thee: thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers; for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God." Cp. also ib. vv. 14, 25, 26; xxxi. 3, 15—18.

Ver. 1. *in the congregation of princes* or 'the mighty' A.V.; more literally, 'in gods assembly,' *i. e.* either 'the assembly that God holds' or 'the assembly of gods.' The meaning is the same in either case; by 'gods' are meant the heathen princes or rulers who oppress the Israelites in their captivity. Cp. ver. 8 and § 53 Ps. lviii. Introduction and notes.

He giveth judgment. For a similar picture cp. Is. iii. 13—15, "The Lord standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people: the Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of His people, and the princes thereof;... 'what mean ye that ye beat My people to pieces and grind the faces of the poor?' saith the Lord God of hosts."

Ver. 6. *I said, 'ye are gods.'* For the meaning of this title cp. § 16 Ps. ii. Introd. and note: for similar false assumptions cp. the description of the courtiers of Darius the Mede (Dan. v.), and the title of 'Divus,' which the Roman emperors arrogated to themselves.

Ver. 8. *all heathen.* The relation of the God of Israel to the heathen, the fact that He was Lord over all the peoples of the earth, was one of the lessons of the captivity, the greatest of the new truths, which the Psalmists and Prophets of this period were constantly teaching the most exclusive of all nations.

§ 84. PSALM XIV OR LIII.

¹ Cp. § 24
note and
App. A.

THE 14th and 53rd are different versions of one and the same Psalm¹.

There is a remarkable similarity in thought and expression between this Psalm and the preceding. The tone of this is sterner, and the destruction of the oppressors of Israel

² Cp. *ps.* 6,
⁷ with § 83
Ps. lxxxii. 7,
⁸
³ Cp. note.

seems to be nearer² and more certain. It may have been written, when Babylon³, the great representative of the giant

⁴ *v.* 6.

powers of the heathen empires, already tottering, was waiting

but the sentence of God's judgment to crumble into ruins⁴.

In the great drama of the world, as unfolding before the Psalmist's eye, God is seen coming to examine the pretensions of His foes when their wickedness has reached its height.

The fool hath said in his heart: 'There is no God!' 1
corrupt are they and become abominable in their doings, 2
there is none that doeth good.

Jehovah looked down from heaven upon the children of men, 3
to see if there were any that would understand
and seek after God.

But they were all gone out of the way, they were all together
become abominable, 4
there was none that was doing good,
no, not one!

'are not they without understanding that work wickedness, 8 (5)
that have eaten up My people as it were bread,
and have not called upon Jehovah?'

There were they brought into great fear, yea into a fear that
was no fear; 9 (6)

for God hath scattered abroad their bones :

they took counsel against the poor and were put to confusion,
because God hath despised them ! 10 (7)

O that salvation were given unto Israel out of Sion ! 11 (8)
when Jehovah turneth the captivity of His people,
then shall Jacob rejoice and Israel shall be right glad.

Note. For a similar prophetic utterance cp. Is. xxi. 2, 6, 8, 9. "A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam, besiege O Media;...for thus hath the Lord said unto me, 'Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth.' And he cried 'behold here cometh a horseman and a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods He hath broken unto the ground.'"

Ver. 1. *the fool*. As righteousness was equivalent to blessedness (cp. § 25 Ps. xxiii. 3 note), so wisdom or understanding was synonymous with godliness and virtue, cp. vv. 2, 3. The fool or 'vile person' is defined (Isai. xxxii. 6) as one who worketh iniquity and uttereth error against Jehovah. The heathen as idolaters were specially thus designated, cp. Deut. xxxii. 21. "I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation," cp. the Apocrypha, Wisd. i. 3 etc.

Ver. 3. *the children of men*, i. e. the heathen as distinguished from the chosen people of God.

Ver. 4. Between the 4th and 5th verse the Prayer Book Version following the Vulgate and a MS. of LXX. inserts the following three verses which are not found in the Authorised Version. "Their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues do they deceive, the poison of asps is under their lips: their mouth is full of cursing (or perjury) and deceit: their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and unhappiness is in their ways, and the way of peace do they not know. There is no fear of God before their eyes." The fact of these three verses, which are really a cento from various Psalms, following immediately upon the quotation of the 3rd and 4th verses in the epistle to the Romans (iii. 13, 18) led the copyist into the belief that it was a continuous quotation, and he consequently inserted the three verses in the MS. of the Psalm.

Ver. 8 (5). *eating up My people as it were bread*, cp. Jer. l. 17, "Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria

hath devoured him, and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones." And Micah iii. 3, "Hear ye princes of the house of Jacob: 'Is it not for you to know judgment?...who eat the flesh of My people and flay their skin from off them; and they break their bones and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron'."

Ver. 9 (6). *that was no fear*, *i. e.* was no mere fear but a stern reality; a forcible picture of the sudden destruction which would be brought by God on their present oppressors as on Assyria of old. It marks the deep impression made on the mind of the nation by the catastrophe of the great army of Sennacherib. This is the version of the 53rd Psalm; the 14th has,

'then were they afraid with a fear
that God was in the generation of the righteous!
they took counsel against the poor, but ye shall see that it is vain,
for Jehovah is his refuge!'

§§ 85—108. THE PILGRIM ODES.

THE fifteen¹ Psalms which begin with the 120th and end with the 134th appear to form a smaller Psalter by themselves. They are marked by the same title 'the songs of the goings up²,' which some have held to imply that they were marked by some peculiarity of an ascending rhythm, and others that they were sung on the steps of the Temple, but which their contents shew must have meant 'the songs of the goings up from captivity.' They are in fact the Pilgrim Odes of the Hebrew nation, the voice of the exile who 'lifts up his eyes unto the hills of his home³,' and 'calls unto Jehovah from the deep⁴.'

As the prosperity of other nations spreads their citizens over the world as colonists or conquerors, so adversity had dispersed the Israelites among all lands as slaves in the home of the stranger.

¹ The 132nd Psalm must however be excepted, cp. § 123. The 14th, 87th, and 137th, might also be included. Cp. §§ 84, 99, 100.

² Translated by the A. V. 'songs of degrees,' see App. B.

³ § 86 Ps. cxxi. 1.

⁴ § 88 Ps. cxxx. 1.

Only those who were deported into Chaldea were numerous enough to maintain under these circumstances anything approaching to national unity, and these were they who suffered the worst persecution. The measure of their fidelity was the measure also of their suffering. Any attempt to adhere to the hallowed customs of their ancestors brought mockery on them in addition to oppression. The tenderer spirits had a religious horror of defiling themselves by any contact with the unclean, but now to eat with the heathen seemed as nothing in comparison with the other necessities of their position. Some of the faithful had to drain the cup of suffering to the dregs and end a life of disappointed hopes by imprisonment, dishonour and death, while the misery of their lot was enhanced by the sight of their faithless brethren who had adopted the customs of their conquerors and were now prospering in the world and having riches in possession.

But though the community was thus outwardly destroyed, sparks of life were still smouldering within. The prophets, once the unwelcome censors of their prosperity, were now the comforts of their adversity. They had foretold the dispersion of a corrupted people and their threats of Divine vengeance had been fulfilled; they now foretold the resurrection of the purified nation from its ashes, and should not this also receive its fulfilment? Ezekiel could foresee the final victory of Israel, even when they were still under the iron hand of the king who had been the terror of Asia for half a century. The prophets had kept the fire of hope alive in their own hearts, and the occurrence of any favourable incident could not fail to rekindle it again in the hearts of the nation. Thus, when the rule of the Chaldeans became lighter under the weaker hands of Nebuchadnezzar's successors, a 'remnant' begins to gather round a centre, their spiritual feelings are quickened by union, their trust in Jehovah revives, and they long to see His religion restored once more in the Holy City.

As with these feelings in their hearts, they turned their eyes to Jerusalem when they prayed, so when they had more freedom to go

where their hearts would lead them, and the deserted city was no longer guarded as at first, there were many who were ready to face the dangers of the desert to revisit the scene of Jehovah's kingdom upon earth and the ruins of His temple. A Hebrew poet has enshrined the feelings of these pilgrims in the tender hymns which are collected in this series. The first of them⁵ seem to express the yearning hopes of the later period of captivity: the later ones⁶ of a time when 'the remnant' had already returned and the Temple-worship was once more established on Mount Zion.

⁵ §§ 85—89.

⁶ §§ 90—108.

§§ 85—89. PILGRIM ODES OF THE CAPTIVITY.

PSALMS CXX, CXXI, CXXIII, CXXX, CXXXI.

§ 85. PSALM CXX.

THE Psalmist pictures the pilgrim passing through the desert from Babylon to his home in Palestine, beset
¹ v. 5. by savage tribes¹, with whom no treaty can be kept.

When I am in trouble I call upon Jehovah,	1
and He heareth me.	
Deliver my soul, O Jehovah, from among lying lips,	2
and from the deceitful tongue!	
What shall He give or do unto thee,	3
thou false tongue,	
that art as mighty and sharp arrows,	4
and hot burning coals!	

Woe is me that I am constrained to dwell with Meshech, 5
 and to have my habitation in the tents of Kedar!
 my soul hath long dwelt among them 6
 that are enemies unto peace:
 I labour for peace, but when I speak unto them thereof 7
 they make them ready for battle.

Ver. 2. *deliver my soul, i. e. save my life*, O God, from the treachery of these Bedouin tribes.

Ver. 3. Cp. the formula of cursing, "God do so to thee and more also." 1 Sam. iii. 17.

Ver. 4. *arrows, i. e. the treacherous tongue* of ver. 3. The 'arrows' are often interpreted as the reward of the false tongue, but cp. § 52 Ps. lvii. 5, "whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword," and § 54 Ps. lix. 7, "swords are in their lips," where swords and arrows are the types of the tongue of a foe. Cp. also Jer. ix. 8.

Ver. 5. *Meshech and Kedar*. These two tribes are mentioned as being far from Jerusalem, and from their remoteness being considered as types of barbarism. Meshech, the Moschi of Herodotus, a tribe in the extreme North (dwelling on the skirts of the Caucasus), and so contrasted with Kedar or Arabia (Is. xxi. 13, 16) on the South; as if they were the Scylla and Charybdis of a passage through the desert. Meshech appears as an ally of Magog, *i. e.* the Scythian hordes, in Ezekiel xxxviii. 2. See Gen. x. 2.

§ 86. PSALM CXXI.

THE exile sighs for the hills of his home¹: he sees no ^{1 v. 1.}
 sign of help, yet with the name of the Creator, the
 Keeper of Israel, for his talisman², he wins his way through ^{2 vv. 2, 3, 4.}
 doubt to trust, from inward conflict to peace.

The metaphors here, as in the last Psalm, speak of the
 special dangers of the desert, heat of the burning sun by
 day³ and perils from lawless tribes by night⁴.

³ vv. 5, 6.

⁴ vv. 3, 4.

Answer to the prayer of the exile.

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills ;	1
Oh, whence cometh my help ?	
my help cometh from Jehovah,	2
Who hath made heaven and earth.	
Will He suffer thy foot to be moved ?	3
and He that keepeth thee, shall He sleep ?	
behold, He that keepeth Israel	4
shall neither slumber nor sleep !	

God watcheth his journey.

Jehovah Himself is thy keeper,	5
Jehovah is a shelter upon thy right hand,	
so that the sun shall not burn thee by day,	6
nor the moon by night :	
Jehovah shall preserve thee from all evil,	7
yea, it is even He that shall keep thy soul ;	
Jehovah shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in	8
from this time forth for evermore !	

Ver. 1. *the hills* of Palestine, the words of an exile, cp. Nahum ii. 1 and Ezekiel passim.

Ver. 3, 4. *keepeth thee*, i. e. as the watch of their nightly encampment.

Ver. 5. *shelter* (or shade) against the rays of the sun. Cp. "abide under the shadow of the Almighty," § 117 Ps. xci. 1, where the idea is expanded (1-14).

Ver. 6. The idea of the baneful influence of the moon is common in the East.

§ 87. PSALM CXXIII.

A SIGH of the exiles for their return : they are waiting
in patience the summons of the Almighty.

Unto Thee lift I up mine eyes, 1
O Thou that dwellest in the heavens !
behold, even as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of
their masters,
and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress :
even so our eyes wait upon Jehovah our God, 2
until He have mercy upon us.

Have mercy upon us, O Jehovah, have mercy upon us, 3
for we are utterly despised ;
our soul is filled with the scornful reproof of the careless, 4
and with the despitefulness of the proud !

§ 88. PSALM CXXX.

WITH a patriot's feelings the Psalmist sees his own
weal and woe in the fortunes of his suffering bre-
thren ; he depicts himself as a sentinel at his post, longing
for the sun of Jehovah's mercy to rise and chase away the
dark night of captivity.

The Psalmist prayeth for deliverance.

Out of the deep have I called unto Thee, O Jehovah! 1

Lord, hear my voice! O let Thine ears consider well
the voice of my complaint! 2

If Thou, Jehovah, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss,

O Lord, who may abide it? 3

but there is mercy with Thee, 4

therefore shalt Thou be feared!

I look for Jehovah, my soul doth wait for Him, 5

in His word is my trust;

my soul waiteth for Jehovah, 6

more than watchmen for the morning, I say, than watchmen

for the morning. 7

O Israel, trust in Jehovah!

for with Jehovah there is mercy and with Him is plen-

teous redemption;

and HE shall redeem Israel 8

from all his sins!

Ver. 4. This is a time when the *fear* of God will be better promoted by an exhibition of His gentler attributes of loving mercy and faithfulness than by a further revelation of His power.

Ver. 5. *His word*, *i. e.* the promise of blessing and deliverance. Cp. § 51 Ps. lvi. 5, 10 and §§ 37, 63.

Ver. 6. *more*, *i. e.* more eagerly than the watchman waiteth for the dawn of day, which is to free him from his wearisome post.

Ver. 8. *from* the penalty of the *sins* of their prosperity, for which they are now suffering retribution in their exile. Cp. Jer. ix. 13—16.

§ 89. PSALM CXXXI.

THE Psalmist having learnt from adversity the lesson of submission, counsels the nation to fit itself in like manner for winning the blessings which are still in store.

Peace in resignation.

Jehovah! I am not high-minded, I have no proud looks, 1
 I do not exercise myself in great matters which are too
 high for me; 2
 but I refrain my soul and keep it still, 3
 like as a child that is weaned on his mother,
 so resteth my soul even as a weaned child.

O Israel, trust in Jehovah, 4
 from this time forth for evermore.

Ver. 1. *I do not exercise myself in great matters*; I speak only of the simple duty of submission to God's will; I do not indulge in restless thoughts or visions of a great deliverance. Cp. Jer. xlv. 5.

Ver. 3. *a weaned child*. As the child that is fully weaned rests quietly on its mother's bosom without yearning any longer for the breast, so the Psalmist's soul, weaned from passionate longing, acquiesces in the dispensation of God.

PERIOD IV.

*PSALMS FROM THE PERIOD OF THE
REBUILDING OF JERUSALEM.*

PERIOD IV.

PSALMS FROM THE PERIOD OF THE REBUILDING OF JERUSALEM.

NATIONS do not survive dispersion. As long as they retain their country they may survive conquest and loss of freedom; but with the severance of the local tie patriotism dies, the national unity is dissolved and its members form new connexions in their new homes. So Israel melted away in Assyria. Judah alone proved indestructible.

With an unparalleled faith in the future the inspired statesmen of Judah had fearlessly acquiesced in the loss of country and home. Jeremiah seems to have deliberately given up all thought for that national independence which Isaiah had held so dear, and to have welcomed the sharp remedy¹ of dispersion as the

¹ Is. i. 5.

only cure for the growing evil of national corruption. The purchase of Hananeel's field¹ was but the outward symbol of a deeply-rooted belief that the tie of union was not material but spiritual, and that the nation might indeed survive the loss of country, but could not survive the loss of its religion. He maintained this belief at the cost of being taunted as a coward and imprisoned as a traitor, but the event justified the apparently aimless sacrifice of his patriotism. The plague of national corruption was stayed; and within the seventy years, the typical limit of a human lifetime, the nation had recovered its country. The blight had proved a blessing. None but a prophet's eye could have foreseen how Judah would be purified by the discipline of adversity. It is true that the series of the prophets ceased and the Canon was soon closed; but why? Because the nation had begun to learn the lessons which the prophets were appointed to teach. They had not indeed learned the deepest truth of all—the lesson of the new Covenant proclaimed by Jeremiah²—to live not on the letter but on the spirit of revelation; but has the lesson been learned even at this day, though it has been reiterated by a greater than Jeremiah?

Some lessons however they had learned: they had learned the lesson taught in the Lamentations, the evil of sin and the power of repentance; they saw the imperfections of the past and aimed at a nobler future. They had learned from separation from the Temple and its sacrifices the value of prayer; this raised them another step above the heathen. They had learned from

¹ Jer. xxxi. 38.

² Jer. xxxi 33. "I will make a new covenant, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers;.....I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts." Cp. ib. iii. 16, xxii. 39, 40. Ezek. xi. 19.

the fall of empires¹ not only the emptiness of mere power, but the vanity of idols; with the establishment of the 'houses of prayer' in the dispersion the taint of idolatry disappears; the worship of wood and stone not merely lost its attractions, but became a butt for their scorn². They had learned from the Evangelical Prophet, in whom the greatest of the old prophets seemed to live once more, to look upon themselves as the ambassadors of God to the heathen; and to see that their mission was to be not the preachers only but the pattern of righteousness to mankind. Finally they had learned, with the newly awakened consciousness of their own shortcomings, that this could not come till they had a king who would deliver them not only from outward oppression but from the inward thralldom of sin. The immediate need was soon to be accomplished; the prophets are the first to recognize Cyrus' calling as the reformer of Asia, the iconoclast and the destroyer of the corruptions of Babylon. Struck by the comparative purity of his faith, they might well for a moment see in him the anointed of Jehovah, whom Israel was to help in re-organizing the world. They had brought Jehovah's religion into contempt by their disobedience, they must now re-establish it, not only by a local restoration at Jerusalem but by the conversion of all the nations of the world.

The results of the Captivity may be thus briefly epitomized. The nation once careless of the law were becoming worshippers of its very letter; once tempted by idolatry, they now treated it with scorn; once below the teaching of sacrifices, they had now risen to spiritual worship through prayer; once rigorously exclusive,

¹ §§ 35—38 Introd.

² Is. xliv. 14—17, "he heweth him down cedars.....he burneth part thereof in the fire, he roasteth roast,.....he warmeth himself.....and with the residue thereof he maketh a god and worshippeth it." Ib. xl. 19, 20. Jer. x. 3—5.

they saw their ideal in the king who should enroll all the world as citizens of a spiritual Jerusalem¹. The future duty of the nation was to make themselves ready for his advent.

The darker side of the picture,—the elements of decay now at work and the coming degeneracy, will be given in the Introduction to the succeeding Period.

¹ § Ps. lxxxvii. Introd.

PERIOD IV.

PSALMS FROM THE PERIOD OF THE REBUILDING OF JERUSALEM.

[SECTIONS 90—129.]

§§ 90—98. PILGRIM ODES OF THE RESTORATION.

§ 90. PSALM CXXIV.

IN the five preceding Pilgrim¹ odes the Psalmist was still in captivity, beset by treacherous² foes, straining his eyes to see the hills of his home³, longing for his freedom as the watchman for the dawn⁴; sorely had his faith been tried by the mockery of the heathen⁵, yet he had at length learnt the lesson of childlike submission⁶. The day dawned at last. The nation had been well nigh swallowed up by the overwhelming number of its oppressors⁷, but it was not destined to be the prey of the monster

¹ §§ 85—89.
Introduction.
² § 85 Ps.
cxxx.
³ § 86 Ps.
cxxi. 1.
⁴ § 88 Ps.
cxxx. 6.
⁵ § 87 Ps.
cxxiii. 4.
⁶ § 89 Ps.
cxxxii.

⁷ vv. 3, 4, 5.

powers of the Euphrates. The rule of Babylon had been broken by Cyrus, and the captives were freed from the meshes of the net which had so long kept them struggling in its toils⁸. This seemingly accidental circumstance of finding a generous liberator in the new conqueror and the fact of being freed through the help of others and not through any effort of their own made them the more grateful to the Ruler of the destinies of the world⁹, the more anxious to preserve communion with Him who had wrought such great deliverance.

If Jehovah Himself had not been on our side,	1
(now let Israel say:)	
if Jehovah Himself had not been on our side,	
when men rose up against us;	
they had swallowed us up alive,	2
when they were so wrathfully displeased at us:	
yea, the waters had drowned us	3
and the stream had gone over our soul,	
yea, the swelling of the waterfloods	4
had gone even over our soul.	
 But praised be Jehovah,	5
Who hath not given us over for a prey unto their teeth;	
our soul is escaped even as a bird out of the snare of the	
fowler,	6
the snare is broken and we are delivered!	

our help standeth in the name of Jehovah 7
Who hath made heaven and earth.

Ver. 2. Cp. § 43 Ps. lv. 16; Prov. i. 12. Compare the fate of the company of Korah as described in Numb. xvi. 32, 33.

Ver. 3 for *waters* as equivalent to 'enemies,' cp. § 142 Ps. cxliv. 7; § 12 Ps. xviii. 16.

§ 91. PSALM CXXIX.

THIS Psalm is an outburst of joy at deliverance from captivity: the pictures of past suffering and of the destruction of the oppressor are drawn in the simple imagery of agricultural life.

Israel is invincible, for Jehovah hath broken the arm of the oppressor.

Many a time have they fought against me from my youth up, 1
(may Israel now say)
many a time have they fought against me from my youth up, 2
but they have not prevailed against me!
the ploughers ploughed upon my back, 3
and made long furrows:
but Jehovah is righteous; 4
He hath hewn the harness of the ungodly in sunder!
let them be confounded and turned backward, 5
as many as have evil will at Sion,
let them be even as the grass upon the housetops 6
which withereth afore it be grown up:
whereof the mower filleth not his hand, 7
neither he that bindeth up the sheaves his bosom,

so that they who go by say not so much as, 8
 'Jehovah prosper you,
 we wish you good luck in the Name of Jehovah.'

Vv. 3, 6, 7. For frequent agricultural images, cp. the prophet Amos.

Ver. 3. Cp. Is. i. 6. 'I gave my back to the smiters.' Ib. li. 23. "They that afflict thee have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over."

Ver. 4. *harness*. More exactly 'cut the traces.' As when the cords which bind the oxen to the plough are broken, the plougher can no more furrow the earth, so God has cut off from the tyrants the means of the exercise of their tyranny. Cp. § 90 Ps. cxxiv. Introduction.

Ver. 6 from Is. xxxvii. 27. "Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded, they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass of the housetops, and as the corn blasted before it be grown up."

Ver. 8. Cp. the greeting of Boaz to Ruth. ii. 4.

§§ 92, 93. PSALMS CXXV, CXXVI.

¹ Ps. cxxv.
 1, 2.

THESE Psalms date from a time when the new community had been established in Jerusalem by Zerubabel¹, but the rebuilding of the temple was at a standstill from the heavy pressure of the Samaritans supported by Persian nobles. After the first burst of joyous enthusiasm with which the captives had again set foot in Palestine, a reaction had set in. The dread of the constant inroads which destroyed their crops and menaced their safety in the city, led to internal dissensions and to the formation of a party which advocated submission to the foe. Inspired no

doubt by the denunciations of the contemporary Prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, the Psalmist dispels the terrors of the despairing by his confident assurance of future victory.

§ 92. PSALM CXXV.

God's care the stay of the oppressed.

They that put their trust in Jehovah	1
shall be even as the mount Sion which may not be re-	
moved,	
but standeth fast for ever :	
the hills stand about Jerusalem,	2
even so standeth Jehovah round about His people	
from this time forth for evermore :	
for the sceptre of the ungodly shall not rest upon the lot of	
the righteous,	3
lest the wicked put their hand unto wickedness !	
Do well, O Jehovah, unto those that are good,	4
and unto them that are true of heart !	
but as to such as turn aside unto their own wickedness,	5
may Jehovah drive them forth with the evil doers,	
but peace be upon Israel !	

Ver. 2. Though to the traveller who faces Jerusalem the towers seem to stand out against the sky and to be higher than the hills in the immediate neighbourhood, yet to the worshipper in the Temple, the Mount of Olives which considerably overtops even the highest part of Mount Sion, might from the fact of its outlying portions bending round towards the city, naturally give the effect of 'standing round about Jerusalem.' Like Rome the Holy City

had its nearer and more remote barriers of protecting hills; as Rome had its Janiculum hard by and its Apennine and Alban mountains in the distance, so Jerusalem had its Olivet hard by, and on the outposts of its plain, Mizpeh Gibeon and Ramah and the ridge which divides it from Bethlehem. These hills act as a shelter and must be surmounted before the traveller can see, or the invader attack the Holy City; and the distant line of Moab would always seem to rise as a wall against invaders from the remote East. Abridged from Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, 3rd Edit. pp. 174, 175.

so standeth Jehovah round about His people. Cp. Zech. ii. 4, 5. "Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls, for I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about."

Ver. 3. *rest upon*, *i.e.* the heathen shall not always lay his hand so heavily upon the promised land, (the *lot* of the true Israelite) that the people may not be tempted by prolonged adversity to leave the true religion.

Ver. 5. *crooked ways*, *i.e.* let those who are Israelites by birth, but renegades at heart, be swept away with the evildoers, *i.e.* the heathen foe to whose camp they really belong.

§ 93. PSALM CXXVI.

¹ Cp. §§ 92,
93, *Introd.*

CONTRAST¹ of the many dangers of the present with the unclouded joy of the first years after the return from captivity.

When Jehovah turned again the captivity of Sion,	1
then were we like unto them that dream;	
then was our mouth filled with laughter,	2
and our tongue with joy;	
then said they among the heathen:	3
'Jehovah hath done great things for them!'	
yea, Jehovah hath done great things for us:	4
then were we full of joy.	

Turn our captivity, O Jehovah,	5
as the rivers in the south ;	
they that sow in tears,	6
shall reap in joy ;	
he that now goeth on his way weeping and beareth forth the	
seed	7
shall doubtless come again with joy,	
and bring his sheaves with him.	

Ver. 5. *rivers in the south.* As Job compares his false friends to the "stream of brooks, which when it is hot are consumed out of their place..... they go to nothing and perish" (Job vi. 15, 17, 18), so the repeopling of the land after the captivity is compared to the grateful return of the water to the streams of southern Judah after the summer drought.

Ver. 6. *sow in tears.* Sion though now built in tears shall have a glorious future. The new colonists seem to have experienced the literal meaning of the words in the alternations of drought and plenty ; cp. the words of the contemporary prophet, Haggai (i. 10, 11 ; ii. 19), as also § 113 Ps. lxvii. 6 ; § 126 lxxxv. 12.

Ver. 7. More exactly,

Going he shall go and weep, bearing a load of seed ;
coming he shall come and sing, bearing his sheaves with him.

§§ 94, 95. PSALMS CXXVII, CXXVIII.

THE REPEOPLING OF JERUSALEM.

§ 94. PSALM CXXVII.

¹ i. 2—9. **T**HE commencement of this Psalm is an echo of the words in which Haggai¹ rebuked the people for rebuilding their own homes before they restored the Temple of the Lord. The Psalmist, addressing those who had recently experienced a great deliverance², reminds them that if they would only shew their trust in God by working at His house, He would bless them unawares in the establishing of their own homes. At a time when ‘the people of the land weakened the hands of the men of Judah, and troubled them in building³,’ their immediate need was of men to defend the walls, and their thoughts turned not unnaturally to the repeopling of the deserted city, which is the main idea in this and the following Psalm.

Except Jehovah build the house,	1
their labour is but lost that build it;	
except Jehovah keep the city,	2
the watchman watcheth but in vain.	
It is but lost labour that ye haste to rise up early,	3
and so late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness;	
He blesseth His beloved while they sleep.	

He sendeth to us children the strength of the city.

Lo, children are an heritage of Jehovah, 4
 and the fruit of the womb is His reward ;
 like as arrows in the hand of a mighty man, 5
 even so are the sons of our youth ;
 happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them, 6
 they shall not be ashamed
 when they speak with their enemies in the gate.

Ver. 3. *blesseth, i. e.* by watching over them Himself. What are to others the fruits of anxious toil come to those who cast their cares on God as things in a dream, without any forethought or expectation on their part. Prov. x. 22.

Ver. 5. *the sons of our youth, i. e.* those that would soon be grown up in time to protect the city walls.

Ver. 6. *gate.* Cp. Gen. xxii. 17: "thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies," and xxiv. 60: "be thou the mother of thousands of millions and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them."

§ 95. PSALM CXXVIII.

The blessings of a numerous family

Blessed are all they that fear Jehovah, 1
 and walk in His ways !
 for thou shalt eat the labours of thine hands, 2
 O well is thee, and happy shalt thou be.
 Thy wife shall be as the fruitful vine, 3
 within the chambers of thine house ;
 thy children as the olive-branches 4
 round about thy table :
 lo, thus shall the man be blessed 5
 that feareth Jehovah.

in a beleaguered nation.

Jehovah from out of Sion shall so bless thee, 6
 that thou shalt see Jerusalem in prosperity
 all thy life long.
 yea, that thou shalt see thy children's children. 7
 Peace be upon Israel.

Ver. 2. *shall eat the labour of thine hands.* Perhaps a reference to the inroads of Samaritan foes, who often carried away the harvest, the hard-earned fruits of toil.

§ 96. PSALM CXXXIII.

THE two preceding Psalms expressed the joyous feeling with which the Israelites, when restored to their fatherland, began to look upon their offspring, as born not to exile or to slavery but to be a source of strength to the Lord's people against their foes and to be themselves inheritors of the blessings promised to Jerusalem. In this the blessings of a united family are lost in the larger thought of a united nation, and in the earnest counsel to the other tribes now colonizing Canaan that they should recognize the pre-eminent sanctity¹ of the hill of Sion as the seat of their national worship.

¹Cp. § 36
 Ps. xlviii. 2
 and § 114
 Ps. lxviii. 18.

Behold, how good and joyful a thing it is 1
 for brethren to dwell together in unity!

it is like the precious ointment upon the head, 2
 that ran down unto the beard, even unto Aaron's beard,
 and went down to the skirts of his clothing.
 Like as the dew of Hermon which falleth upon the hill of
 Sion, 3
 for there Jehovah promised His blessing, 4
 even life for evermore.

Ver. 3. *in unity.* The blessings of unity are compared not only with the all-pervading fragrance of holy oil, but also with the moisture that is borne from the snow-capped Hermon and falls in refreshing drops on the dry southern hills of Judah. The thought of the High Priest suggests the idea of the Temple, and this naturally passes into the thought of the Holy Hill: while the earthly dew of Hermon passes into the heavenly blessing of Sion.

Ver. 4. *there, i.e.* to Sion.

§ 97. PSALM CXXXIV.

A TEMPLE hymn, in which the Psalmist exhorts the priests and Levites to the earnest performance of their duties, that thus God's favour may be secured for the nation. That efforts were made towards a re-establishment of something like the old Temple-worship, even before the new Temple was built, appears from accounts of Jeshua and Zerubbabel in the book of Ezra¹.

¹ Ezra iii. 6, 8, 9.

The Psalmist addresseth the Priests.

Behold now, praise ye Jehovah, all ye servants of Jehovah, 1
 ye that by night stand in the house of Jehovah; 2

lift up your hands to the sanctuary,
and praise Jehovah. 3

The answer of the Priests.

Jehovah that made heaven and earth 4
shall give thee blessing out of Sion.

Ver. 3. *to the sanctuary*, or rather to the mercy-seat. (§ 56 Ps. xxviii. 2.)

Ver. 4. *thee, i. e.* the Psalmist himself, for he represents the priests as pronouncing a blessing on the congregation in answer to their previous appeal in vv. 1—3.

§ 98. PSALM CXXII.

THIS Psalm should rather be called a blessing on a party of pilgrims than a pilgrim-hymn. It seems to be the utterance of an aged exile, himself unequal to a journey across the desert¹. The departure of his friends reminds him of the alacrity with which he too had once obeyed a similar summons²; his spirit is fired by sympathy with their enthusiasm and he pours forth the praises of that city, which from the earliest times had been recognized as the keystone of the national unity, the civil and religious metropolis of the tribes³.

I was glad when they said unto me; 1
‘we will go to the house of Jehovah!’

Our feet did stand 2
in thy gates, O Jerusalem;

Jerusalem, that art built	3
as a city that is compact in itself;	
thither the tribes went up, even the tribes of Jehovah,	4
according to an ordinance for Israel, to praise the Name	
of Jehovah :	
for there was the seat of judgment,	5
even the seat of the house of David !	
O pray for the peace of Jerusalem ;	6
prosperous be thy pavilions !	
peace be within thy walls,	7
and plenteousness within thy palaces !	
for my brethren and companions' sake	8
I will wish thee prosperity ;	
yea, because of the house of Jehovah our God	9
I will seek to do thee good.	

Ver. 3. *compact*. "These deep ravines which separate Jerusalem from the rocky plateau of which it forms a part are a rare feature in the scenery of the Holy Land. Something of the same effect is produced by the vast rents surrounding Granada on the table lands which crown the summits of the Spanish mountains. But in Palestine Jerusalem alone is so entrenched and from this cause derives in great measure her early strength (2 Sam. v. 6, Josh. xv. 63), and subsequent greatness....The deep depressions which thus secured the city, must, like the Jordan valley to the whole country, have always acted as its natural defence, but they also determined its natural boundaries. The city, wherever else it spread, could never overleap the valley of the Kedron or of Hinnom...The expression of *compactness* was still more appropriate to the original city if, as seems probable, the valley of Tyropæon formed in earlier times a fosse within a fosse, shutting in Sion and Moriah into one compact mass not more than half a mile in breadth." (Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, 3rd edition. pp. 172, 173.)

Ver. 4. *went up*. In allusion to the law requiring all males to attend the three great feasts. Ex. xxiii. 17, xxxiv. 23, Deut. xvi. 16.

Vv. 6, 7. The alliteration in these verses represents the play on the meaning of Jerusalem as a 'peaceful possession.'

Ver. 9. *seek to do thee good, i. e.* win a blessing for thee by my prayers.

§ 99. PSALM LXXXVII.

THIS Psalm breathes the high hopes of the time when Jehovah promised to 'return unto Sion and to dwell again in the midst of Jerusalem¹,' when, amid the inspirit-
¹ Zech. viii. 3.
² Ezra iii. 10. ing sounds of the trumpets and cymbals² and the joyous shouts of the people, the foundation-stone of the new Temple was being laid, when Zerubbabel the son of Salathiel, the
³ Hag. ii. 23. signet of Jehovah³, the anointed descendant of the David who had won for Israel their first settlement on Mount Sion, was again installed there as the prince of the house of Judah, and was allowed the honour denied to David himself, of being the builder of the house of Jehovah.

The joy of the time was enhanced by the unexpected nature of the deliverance. Little could they have hoped for such an hour during the long years of a seemingly endless exile, when their race seemed like a drop lost in the vast sea of nations which formed the Babylonian Empire. The sudden turn in the world's history, which had restored them to their land and made them the favoured subjects

⁴ Is. xlv. 28; xlv. 1. of one whom they recognized as Jehovah's Anointed⁴ upon earth, may well have kindled high hopes in the soul of the prophets who with Zechariah 'bade their hands be strong in the great day of the foundation of the house of the Lord of Hosts⁵.'

⁵ Zech. viii. 9.

The prophetic descriptions of the glory of Mount Sion lead the Psalmist to pour forth his feelings in song, as his heart was enlarged to realize the grand idea of the whole world as one fold under one Shepherd, servants of Him whose kingdom was again established on Mount Sion. Rising above the exclusiveness which marred the greatness of the Israelite, he would extend the rights of Abraham's children to all; for have not all, who are in heart the true servants of Jehovah, been born again as citizens of Jerusalem? In the expressive words of the contemporary prophet, many and strong nations would come to seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem and to pray before the Lord; men of all languages of the world would take hold of the skirt of him that was a Jew, saying, 'we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you⁶.'

⁶ Zech. viii.
22, 23.

The Psalmist repeateth the promises of the prophets that Jerusalem shall be the metropolis of the world and all mankind shall be counted as her citizens.

- | | |
|--|---|
| [Jehovah loveth Sion,] | 1 |
| His foundations are upon the holy hills; | |
| Jehovah loveth the gates of Sion | |
| more than all the dwellings of Jacob. | |
| Glorious things are spoken of thee, | 2 |
| thou city of God: | |
| "I will say of Rahab and Babylon, as of them that know Me, | 3 |
| lo, of the Philistine also and of Tyre with the Ethiopian, | 4 |
| 'this man was born in her!' | |

and of Sion it shall be said : 5
 'this man and that man was born in her,
 and the most High Himself shall stablish her !'
 Jehovah shall count when He writeth up the people : 6
 'this man was born in her !'—
 singers also and dancers 7
 all have their habitation in thee !"

Ver. 1. The first verse stands simply 'His founded (city) upon the holy hills,' cp. Is. xiv. 32. The abruptness of the opening requires us to supply in words or in thought the commencement of the next verse.

Ver. 2. *are spoken of thee, i. e.* by the prophets, and especially by Isaiah, cp. ii. 2—4, "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established...and all nations shall flow unto it." xi. 10, "There shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek": so with special reference to Ethiopia (xviii), Egypt (xix), Philistia (xx), Tyre (xxiii), cp. esp. xix. 21—25, "The Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord and perform it...Blessed be Egypt My people and Assyria the work of My hands and Israel Mine inheritance." The promises in some passages seem to be limited to 'the outcasts of Israel and the dispersed of Judah,' in others to be more general. Cp. note on the history of Messianic expectations, § 63 Ps. lxxii.

Ver. 3. *Rahab*, literally 'the proud one,' *i. e.* Egypt; a poetical name especially used where there is an allusion to Israel's escape out of the clutches of Egypt, cp. Job xxvi. 12, "He divideth the sea with His power, and smiteth through Rahab" (A.V. 'the proud'), Ib. ix. 13, "the helpers of Rahab (A.V. 'the proud helpers') do stoop under Him." Cp. also Is. li. 9, § 124 Ps. lxxxix. 10.

Ver. 4. *this man, i. e.* each individual of all this innumerable multitude of nations shall have the rights of Jewish descent and be counted for sons of Abraham born in Jerusalem. Cp. note on ver. 3, and vv. 5, 6.

Ver. 6. *Jehovah shall count their names* when He maketh the lists of citizens in His city, cp. Ezek. xiii. 9, "they shall not be in the assembly of My people, neither shall they be written in the house of Israel, neither shall they

enter into the land of Israel." For the custom of keeping rolls of citizens cp. Ezra ii. 59, Neh. vii. 5.

Ver. 7. A picture of the future glories of Sion, when the *singers and dancers* of the world should no longer prostitute their talents to the services of profane or lascivious worship but raise their united voice to Jehovah in His Temple.

§ 100. PSALM CXXXVII.

DURING the Captivity the Jews had shrunk from exposing their faith to the mockery of the heathen. The great hymns setting forth their claims to be the chosen people and their confidence in the destinies of their nation would have provoked the cry, 'where is now your God?'

Nowhere is so clearly exhibited as in this Psalm the undying love to the city of Jehovah which the nobler spirits had cherished during the exile, and which the prophets strove to infuse into the mass of their brethren amidst the difficulties of their return. To this, as to all local attachments, there were two sides. The nobler found expression in the comprehensive feelings of the preceding Psalm¹—the narrower was capable of peculiar bitterness. The same feeling which excited the animosity of the Samaritans when our Lord 'set his face as though he would go to Jerusalem,' and against which one of the most impressive of the parables

is directed, here vents itself upon the Edomites², who had joined the invading host of Nebuchadnezzar in that fatal 'day of Jerusalem,' and had received a portion of the land

¹ § 99 Ps. lxxxvii.

² Cp. Stanley's *Jewish Church*, ii. pp. 556, 7.

as a reward for their share in the destruction of the kingdom. The perfidy of their ancient vassals may well have aroused especial indignation in the heart of the Psalmist at a time when the Israelites cherished hopes of restoring the kingdom to its ancient limits.

I.

By the waters of Babylon we sat down, and wept 1
when we remembered thee, O Sion ;
as for our harps we hanged them up 2
upon the trees that are therein :
for they that led us away captive required of us then a song, 3
and they that wasted us melody in our heaviness :
'sing us one of the songs of Sion.'

II.

How should we sing the song of Jehovah 4
in a strange land !—
if I forget thee, O Jerusalem, 5
let my right hand forget her cunning ;
if I do not remember thee 6
let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth ;
yea, if I prefer not Jerusalem to my mirth !

III.

O Jehovah, remember the children of Edom, in the day of
Jerusalem, 7
how they said : 'down with it, down with it,
even to the ground !'

O daughter of Babylon, that wastest with misery ! 8
 happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served
 us ;
 yea, blessed shall he be that taketh thy children 9
 and throweth them against the stones !

Ver. 1. It was this depth of sorrow which had occasioned the fasts which commemorated the month of the fall of Jerusalem, cp. Zech. vii. 3, 'Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself as I have done these many years?' was the question which the people asked on their return. Cp. 2 Kings xxv. 8.

Ver. 5. Cp. 1 Kings xiii. 4, § 37 Ps. lxxvi. 5.

Ver. 6. So A.V. 'prefer Jerusalem above my chief joy.'

Ver. 7. Remember (upon) the children of Edom the day of Jerusalem, *i. e.* requite them for their share in its destruction.

Ver. 8. *wastest with misery.* ambiguous; either 'layest waste,' thus giving the justification of the following prayer for vengeance; or 'wasting away,' *i. e.* doomed to destruction; Babylon had been already conquered.

Ver. 9. Cp. Hos. x. 14 (of Israel), 'all thy fulness shall be destroyed, as Shalman spoiled Betharbel in the day of battle: the mother was dashed to pieces upon her children.'

§§ 101—104. PSALMS CXVIII, CXV, CXVI, CXXXVIII.

THESE four Psalms have a great resemblance to one another in tone and style. All contain the same joyful gratitude for a recent deliverance from the persecution of heathen nations. All have the same deep sense that only by the continuance of divine aid can the fruits of victory be secured. Such feelings would in an eminent degree be called forth by the restoration under Zerub-

babel, and it is not impossible that these Psalms are from his pen.

§ 101. PSALM CXVIII.

THIS Psalm was obviously designed for the celebration of a great national festival. As however it contains no allusions to the greater Hebrew festivals, it may have been sung at the feast of Tabernacles, in which case the word 'tents'¹ would have a peculiar propriety. Like the other Psalms of this period, it speaks the triumphant tone of a nation just escaped from the midst of foreign oppression², and we may imagine such a Psalm being sung at the great celebration of the feast of Tabernacles recorded in Ezra³.

I.

A triumphal procession approacheth the Holy Place with sacrifice and thanksgiving

[Choir.]

O give thanks unto Jehovah, for He is gracious,	1
<i>His mercy endureth for ever.</i>	
Therefore let Israel confess,	2
<i>His mercy endureth for ever:</i>	
therefore let the house of Aaron confess,	3
<i>His mercy endureth for ever:</i>	
therefore let all that fear Jehovah confess,	4
<i>His mercy endureth for ever.</i>	

for deliverance from the heathen,

[*Leader of Choir.*]

I called upon Jehovah in trouble :	5
and Jehovah heard me and set me at large :	
Jehovah is on my side, I will not fear ;	6
what can man do unto me ?	
Jehovah taketh my part with them that help me,	7
therefore shall I see my desire upon mine enemies !	
It is better to trust in Jehovah,	8
than to put any confidence in man ;	
it is better to trust in Jehovah,	9
than to put any confidence in princes.	

II.

[*Leader and Choir alternately.*]

All nations compassed me round about,	10
<i>but in the name of Jehovah I destroy them,</i>	
they kept me in, they kept me in, I say, on every side,	11
<i>but in the name of Jehovah I destroy them,</i>	
they came about me like bees,	12
and are extinct even as a fire of thorns,	
<i>in the name of Jehovah I destroy them.</i>	

[*Leader.*]

Thou hast thrust at me that I might fall,	13
but Jehovah was my helper,	
Jehovah is my praise and my song !	14
for He is become my salvation !	

III.

and restoration to their country.

Hark the voice of joy and triumph 15
is in the tents of the righteous :
the right hand of Jehovah bringeth mighty things to pass !
the right hand of Jehovah hath the pre-eminence, 16
the right hand of Jehovah bringeth mighty things to pass.
I shall not die but live, 17
and declare the works of Jehovah ;
Jehovah hath chastened me sore, 18
but He hath not given me over unto death.

IV.

The procession reacheth the Holy Place.

Open unto me the gates of righteousness, 19
that I may go in and praise Jehovah !
this is the gate of Jehovah, 20
the righteous enter into it ;
I will give thanks unto Thee for Thou hast heard me, 21
and art become my salvation !
the same stone which the builders refused, 22
is become the headstone in the corner :
this is Jehovah's doing 23
and is marvellous in our eyes.

[People.]

This is the day that Jehovah hath made, 24
let us rejoice and be glad in it !
Give us help now, O Jehovah, 25
O Jehovah, send us now prosperity !

[*The high priest*]*blesseth the procession and the offering.*

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of Jehovah! 26

we wish you good luck from the house of Jehovah!

Jehovah is God: and HE hath shewed us light; 27

bind the sacrifice with cords,

yea, even unto the horns of the altar!

[*Leader of Choir.*]

Thou art my God, and I will thank Thee, 23

Thou art my God, and I will praise Thee!

[*Choir.*]

Give thanks unto Jehovah for He is gracious, 29

and His mercy endureth for ever.

Ver. 1. From Jer. xxxiii. 11, "Praise the Lord of Hosts: for the Lord is good: and His mercy endureth for ever." § 46 Ps. cxxxvi. 1, "O give thanks unto the Lord: for He is gracious, and His mercy endureth for ever," and § 133 Ps. cvi. 1; we see that the form of praise in verse 1 was a customary formula in the Temple services. Here it is to be thrice uttered by the Israelites and repeated by the proselytes, 'those who fear Jehovah.' Comp. also § 69 Ps. xxii. 23, where 'they that fear the Lord' are distinguished from 'the seed of Israel and Jacob.'

Ver. 12. *bees*, cp. Ex. xxiii. 28. "I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, etc."

Ver. 19. *gates*, cp. Is. xxvi. 2. "Open ye the gates that the righteous nation...may enter it," i. e. the strong city of Judah.

Ver. 22. *stone which the builders refused*. The meaning is that the despised nation of Israel whom the heathen nations had discarded and would have destroyed, is really the first stone and foundation of the kingdom of God. Cp. Is. xxviii. 16. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, 'Behold, I lay in Sion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation,'" while in Jer. li. 26 it is said of Babylon striving for universal dominion, "they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for a foundation," cp. Job xxxviii. 6.

§ 102. PSALM CXV.

A CONGREGATIONAL Psalm sung during the trials and hostilities to which the new community under Zerubbabel was exposed. It is however not so much a prayer for deliverance from danger, as for the maintenance of the true religion. All confidence and claim upon divine protection is founded on the faithful adherence of the nation to Jehovah and its recognition of its duties to Him.

I.

[*People.*]*The invisible God of Israel contrasted*

Not unto us, O Jehovah, not unto us,	I
but unto Thy name give the praise :	
for Thy loving mercy and for Thy truth's sake !	2
wherefore should the heathen say ;	
‘where is now their god?’	
as for our God—He is in Heaven,	3
He doeth whatsoever pleaseth Him.	

II.

with the gods of the heathen.

As for their idols—they are silver and gold,	4
the work of men's hands :	
they have mouths and speak not,	5
eyes have they—and see not :	
they have ears and hear not,	6
noses have they and smell not !	

they have hands and handle not ; 7
 feet have they and walk not,
 neither speak they through their throat.

III.

The future of the Israelites dependent on their recognition of their duty to this God.

Let them that make them be like unto them, 8
 and so be all they that put their trust in them !
 but thou, O Israel, trust thou in Jehovah ! 9
He is their succour and defence ;
 ye house of Aaron, put your trust in Jehovah ! 10
He is their succour and defence.
 ye that fear Jehovah, put your trust in Jehovah ! 11
He is their succour and defence.

[*High-priest.*]

Jehovah hath been mindful of us, and He shall bless us, 12
 He shall bless the house of Israel,
 He shall bless the house of Aaron,
 He shall bless them that fear Jehovah, 13
 both small and great :
 Jehovah shall increase you more and more, 14
 you and your children.
 Blessed be ye of Jehovah, 15
 who made heaven and earth !

[*People.*]

The heavens are the heaven for Jehovah, 16
 but the earth hath He given to the children of men ;
 the dead praise not Jehovah, 17
 neither all they that go down into silence ;
 but we will praise Jehovah, 18
 from this time forth for evermore !

Vv. 4—7. For the scornful description of the heathen gods (cp. Is. xl—xlviii.) as characteristic of the period cp. Introduction to Period IV.

Ver. 16—18. *The earth hath He given to the children of men that they may praise Him thereupon : so will we for evermore.*

§ 103. PSALM CXVI.

THE joy and gratitude called forth by the restoration of national independence found utterance not only in Psalms composed for the public services of the Temple, but also in outbursts of private devotion. The tone of this Psalm is the tone of trouble ; but the power of faith in Jehovah enables the Psalmist to realize the future as already present, and thus a prayer for help passes into a song of joy and thanksgiving.

The abrupt transition in the 10th verse may be accounted for by the loss of a few lines : but the breach of continuity is not sufficient to justify the division into two Psalms, which appears in the Septuagint.

I.

The Psalmist calleth upon Jehovah,

I am well pleased that Jehovah hath heard	1
the voice of my prayer :	
that He hath inclined His ear unto me,	2
therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live.	
When the snares of death compass me round about,	3
and the pains of hell get hold upon me,	
when I find trouble and heaviness,	4

then do I call upon the name of Jehovah,
 'O Jehovah, I beseech Thee deliver my soul !'
 'gracious is Jehovah and righteous, 5
 yea our God is merciful :
 Jehovah preserveth the simple, 6
 I was in misery and He helped me !'

Who delivered him aforetime.

Turn thee again then to thy rest, O my soul, 7
 for Jehovah hath dealt bountifully with thee !
 for why? Thou hast delivered my soul from death, 8
 mine eyes from tears,
 and my feet from falling.
 I will walk before God 9
 in the land of the living.
 I believe in Him when I say 10
 'I was sore troubled.'

II.

The Psalmist receiveth His blessings with gratitude

Verily I said in my trouble,
 'all men are liars.'
 What shall I render unto Jehovah, 11
 for all the benefits which He hath done unto me?
 I will receive the cup of salvation, 12
 and call upon the name of Jehovah,
 I will pay my vows unto Jehovah, 13
 yea, now in the presence of all His people !
 right dear in the sight of Jehovah
 is the death of His saints,

and will yet praise Him in the restored Temple at Jerusalem.

Behold, Jehovah, how that I am Thy servant,	14
I am Thy servant and the son of Thine handmaid:	
Thou hast broken my bonds in sunder!	
I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving,	15
and will call upon the name of Jehovah;	
I will pay my vows unto Jehovah	16
in the sight of all His people—	
in the courts of the house of Jehovah,	
even in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.	

Ver. 3 is derived from § 12 Ps. xviii. 4.

Vv. 7, 8, 9 are derived from § 51 Ps. lvi. 13.

Ver. 10. The meaning is this, The afflictions I have endured have taught me the lesson of confidence in God and the folly of trusting to man. When I exclaim, 'I have been sore troubled but am already delivered' my faith revives; the remembrance of deliverance from past dangers makes me believe in deliverance from my present trouble.

Ver. 17. The *cup* is a frequent metaphor for the portion allotted to man (1) of blessing as in § 65 Ps. xvi. 6, § 25 xxiii. 5, (2) of adversity as in § 1 Ps. xi. 7, § 38 lxxv. 9. Here by a figure Jehovah is represented as a host offering a cup of blessing to His guest. The meaning is 'my best thank-offering to God is cheerfully to accept the blessings which He bestows.'

Ver. 13. *dear is the death of His saints*, i. e. my deliverance from the jaws of death is a proof of the value God puts upon the lives of His saints. Cp. § 63 Ps. lxxii. 14.

§ 104. PSALM CXXXVIII.

THIS Psalm is distinguished by the thought which characterised the times of Zerubbabel. The great idea of the conversion of the heathen to the worship of Jehovah arose first after the overthrow of the Assyrians, and manifests itself in all the writings of this time. It is well exemplified in the prophecy of Zechariah¹. "In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, 'We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you².'" ¹ Zech. viii. 23; cp. viii. 20; ix. 7.

² § 99.

The personal feeling of the Psalmist exhibits a confidence, as noble as that of David, but the national position towards the heathen world is entirely different, as may be seen by comparing this with the 110th Psalm³. ³ § 39 Ps. cx. 5.

I.

I will give thanks unto Thee with my whole heart,	1
even before God do I sing praise unto Thee.	
I will worship at Thy holy Temple and praise Thy name,	2
because of Thy lovingkindness and truth,	
for Thou hast magnified Thy word and Thy Name above all things,	
when I called upon Thee, Thou heardest me,	3
and enduedst my soul with much strength.	

II.

Let all the kings of the earth praise Thee, O Jehovah, 4
for they have heard the words of Thy mouth!
yea, let them sing in the ways of Jehovah, 5
that great is the glory of Jehovah!
for though Jehovah be high, yet hath He respect unto the
lowly, 6
as for the proud, He beholdeth them afar off.

III.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, yet shalt Thou refresh
me, 7
Thou shalt stretch forth Thine hand against the furiousness
of mine enemies,
and Thy right hand shall save me!
Jehovah shall make good His lovingkindness towards me, 8
yea, Jehovah, Thy mercy endureth for ever!
despise not Thou the work of Thine own hands!

Ver. 1. *before God, i. e.* in the Holy Place, the Temple. Cp. 2 Kings
xiii. 23.

Ver. 2. *word, i. e.* fulfilment of promise.

above all things, i. e. above all that we have heard of Thee hast Thou
fulfilled Thy promise. God's Name here as often means not only His titles,
but all that is known of Him by revelation and tradition.

Ver. 6. Cp. Is. lvii. 15, "Thus saith the High and Lofty One that in-
habiteth eternity 'I dwell in the High and Holy place, with him also that is
of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive
the heart of the contrite ones.'"

§§ 105—112. PSALMS XCII, XCIII, XCV—C.

THESE also are plainly Psalms to be assigned to the period that followed the return from captivity. They are similar in tone and intensity of joy, and are all possibly due to the same author.

§ 105. PSALM XCII.

I.

The delight of praising the Lord,

It is a good thing to give thanks to Jehovah,	1
and to sing praises unto Thy Name, O most Highest!	
to tell of Thy lovingkindness early in the morning,	2
and of Thy truth in the night season;	
upon an instrument of ten strings and upon the lute,	3
upon a loud instrument and upon the harp.	

II.

Who upholdeth the true in heart,

For Thou, O Jehovah, hast made me glad through Thy works,	4
and I will rejoice in giving thanks for the operation of Thy hands;	
O Jehovah, how glorious are Thy works!	5
Thy thoughts are very deep!	
an unwise man doth not well consider this,	6
and a fool doth not understand it.	
When the ungodly were green as the grass,	7
and all the workers of wickedness did flourish,—	
it was that they might be destroyed for ever,	
but Thou, Jehovah, art the most Highest for evermore!	

III.

and will bestow His blessing on those who visit His sanctuary.

For lo! Thine enemies, O Jehovah, 8
 for lo! Thine enemies perish:
 and all the workers of wickedness are scattered abroad;
 and Thou hast exalted my horn as the horn of a buffalo, 9
 I am anointed with fresh oil;
 mine eye also hath seen his lust upon mine enemies, 10
 and mine ear hath heard his desire of the wicked that
 rise up against me;
 the righteous doth flourish as a palm-tree, 11
 and spreadeth forth like a cedar in Libanus;
 planted in the house of Jehovah, 12
 and flourishing in the courts of our God,
 they shall bring forth more fruit in their age, 13
 they shall be green and full of sap;
 that they may shew that Jehovah is true, 14
 He is my rock and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

Ver. 9. Cp. § 41 Ps. cxli. 6.

§ 106. PSALM XCIII.

IN this and the six following Psalms we have specimens of the triumphant thanksgiving, public and private, called forth by the restoration of the Israelites to their country.

It seemed as though the kingdom of God were now firmly established and the triumph of His religion secured.

¹ § 109 Ps.

xcvi. 1; § 110

Ps. xcvi. 1;

§ 72 Ps. xl. 3;

§ 142 Ps.

cxliv. 9; § 151

Ps. cxlix 1.

Therefore can the faithful sing 'a new song'¹.

This Psalm depicts the fury of the heathen quelled by the voice of Jehovah.

I.

The Lord reigneth in heaven,

Jehovah is King and hath put on glorious apparel, 1
 Jehovah hath put on His apparel and girded Himself
 with strength;
 He hath made the world so sure that it cannot be moved, 2
 Thy throne is established of old, 3
 Thou art from everlasting.

II.

above the raging of the sea,

'The floods have lift up, O Jehovah, 4
 the floods have lift up their voice :
 the floods lift up their waves ;
 Mighty is the voice of many waters, 5
 yea, mighty is the raging of the sea,
 but Jehovah, who dwelleth on high, is mightier.

III.

and must be worshipped with holy worship.

Thy testimonies are very sure : 6
 holiness becometh Thine house,
 O Jehovah, for ever !

Ver. 5. The imagery is from thunder. As the thunder drowns the fury of the waves, so the voice of God silences the tumults of the world. Cp. § 35 Ps. xlv. 3.

Ver. 6. *testimonies*, i. e. oracles, commandments, etc.

§ 107. PSALM XCVII.

A SONG of thanksgiving for the firm establishment of the kingdom of God.

¹ v. 3—6.

² v. 7.

³ v. 1. Cp.

Introduction
to Period
IV., and
Stanley,
*Jewish
Church*, II.
p. 578.

It is marked by three ideas, which spring from the captivity and the restoration; 1, the great deliverance¹; 2, the scorn of idols²; 3, the extension of view³ to countries beyond the sea.

I.

God who ruleth on high,

Jehovah is King: let the earth rejoice,	1
yea, let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof!	
clouds and darkness are round about Him,	2
righteousness and truth are the foundation of His throne:	
there goeth forth a fire before Him	3
and burneth up His enemies on every side.	

II.

sheweth His glory in the storm.

His lightnings gave shine unto the world,	4
the earth saw it and was afraid:	
the hills melted like wax at the presence of Jehovah,	5
at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.	
the heavens have declared His righteousness,	6
and all peoples have seen His glory.	

III.

The Psalmist quoteth a prophecy which had given assurance to Israel.

'Confounded be all they that worship carved images,	7
and that delight in vain gods!	
worship Him, all ye gods!'	

Sion heard this and rejoiced, and the daughters of Judah are
 glad, 8
 because of Thy judgments, O Jehovah!
 for Thou, Jehovah, art higher than all lands, 9
 Thou art exalted far above all gods.

IV.

In devotion to Him lieth the safety of Israel.

Ye that love Jehovah, see that ye hate the thing which is evil! 10
 He preserveth the souls of His saints; He shall deliver
 them from the hand of the ungodly.
 There is sprung up a light for the righteous 11
 and gladness for such as are true of heart:
 rejoice in Jehovah, ye righteous, 12
 and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.

Ver. 1. *isles, i. e.* remote regions of the world separated from Palestine by water. Cp. Jer. xxv. 22, "The isles which are beyond the sea."

§ 108. PSALM XCIX.

AN exhortation to praise Jehovah from the past experiences of His mercy and judgments.

I.

Jehovah, King of kings,

Jehovah is King: the nations tremble; 1
 He sitteth between the cherubim: the earth doth shake.
 Jehovah is great in Sion, 2
 high is He above all the peoples.
 Praised be His great and glorious Name, 3
for He is Holy!

II.

Who loveth justice,

Praised be the King's strength that loveth judgment! 4
 Thou hast established equity;
 Thou hast executed righteousness and truth in Jacob!
 O magnify Jehovah our God, 5
 fall down before His footstool,
for He is Holy!

III.

and revealeth Himself to His servants, is to be worshipped with holy worship.

Moses and Aaron among His priests, 6
 Samuel among such as call upon His Name;
 these called upon Jehovah and He heard them;
 He spake unto them out of the cloudy pillar, 7
 they kept His testimonies,
 and the law that He gave them:
 Thou heardest them, O Jehovah, our God, 8
 Thou wast unto them a God of mercy,
 but a God of vengeance to their iniquities!
 O magnify Jehovah our God, 9
 and worship towards His holy mountain,
for He is Holy, Jehovah our God.

§§ 109, 110. PSALMS XCVI, XCVIII.

THE two next Psalms are the most general thanksgivings in the Psalter, praising Jehovah as the Deliverer of old, the present Ruler and the future Judge of the whole world.

§ 109. PSALM xcvi.

I.

O sing unto the Lord a new song! 1
sing unto Jehovah all the whole earth!
sing unto Jehovah and praise His Name! 2
be telling of His salvation from day to day!
declare His glory among the heathen, 3
and His wonders among all people!
for Jehovah is great and glorious, 4
He is more to be feared than all gods!
[as for the gods of the heathen, they are but idols, 5
but it is Jehovah who made the heavens:
glory and majesty are before Him, 6
power and honour are in His sanctuary.]

II.

Ascribe unto Jehovah, O ye kindreds of the peoples, 7
ascribe unto Jehovah worship and praise!
ascribe unto Jehovah the honour due unto His name, 8
bring offerings and come into His courts!
O worship Jehovah in holy apparel, 9
let the whole earth stand in awe of Him!
tell it out among the heathen that Jehovah is King, 10
and that He hath made the earth so fast that it cannot
be moved:
and He shall judge the people righteously!

III.

Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad,	11
let the sea make a noise and all that therein is!	
let the field be joyful and all that is in it,	12
then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice	
before Jehovah, for He cometh,	13
for He cometh to judge the earth;	
and with righteousness to judge the world,	
and the people with His truth!	

Vv. 5, 6. These verses which break the structure of the Psalm were possibly added from another Psalm on account of their exact coincidence with the line of thought.

Ver. 12. The metaphor ver. 12 is probably derived from Is. lv. 12. "The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands."

§ 110. PSALM XCVIII.

LIKE the other Psalms of this group, this is plainly composed for a congregational service, to celebrate the restoration of Jerusalem by the mighty hand of God. Its close correspondence to Psalm xcv.¹ is especially obvious at the beginning and end.

§ 111.

I.

God hath delivered His people.

O sing unto Jehovah a new song, for He hath done marvellous things,	1
with His own right hand, and His holy arm hath He gotten Himself the victory!	2

Jehovah hath declared His salvation, 3
 His righteousness hath He openly shewed in the sight of
 the heathen ;
 He hath remembered His mercy and truth toward the house of
 Israel, 4
 and all the ends of the world have seen the salvation of
 our God.

II.

Let the world be glad thereof,

Shew yourselves joyful unto Jehovah, all ye lands ! 5
 sing, rejoice and give thanks ;
 praise Jehovah upon the harp, 6
 sing to the harp with a psalm of thanksgiving !
 with trumpets also and shawms, 7
 O shew yourselves joyful before Jehovah the King !

III.

for He will found a righteous government upon the earth.

Let the sea make a noise and all that therein is, 8
 the world and they that dwell therein !
 let the floods clap their hand 9
 and let the hills be joyful together,
 before Jehovah, for He cometh to judge the earth ; 10
 with righteousness shall He judge the world,
 and the peoples with equity.

§ 111. PSALM XCV.

JEHOVAH alone is God, the Creator of the whole world.
 It was by refusing to follow Him that their forefathers
 excluded themselves from the promised land.

I.

O come let us sing unto the Lord, 1
let us heartily rejoice in the Rock of our salvation ;
let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, 2
and shew ourselves glad in Him with psalms !
for Jehovah is a great God 3
and a great King above all gods :
in His hand are all the corners of the earth, 4
and the heights of the hills are His also :
the sea is His and He made it, 5
and His hand prepared the dry land.
O come let us worship and fall down, 6
and kneel before Jehovah, our Maker !

II.

For HE is the Lord our God, 7
and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His
hand,—
to-day, if ye will hear His voice 8
‘harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
and as in the day of Massah in the wilderness,
when your fathers tempted Me, 9
proved Me and saw My works !
forty years long was I grieved with this generation, 10
and said “It is a people that err in their hearts,
and have not known My ways,”
unto whom I swore in My wrath, 11
that they should not enter into My rest.’

§ 112. PSALM C.

AMONG the Psalms of triumph and thanksgiving this stands pre-eminent, as rising to the highest point of joy and grandeur. No local restrictions, no national exclusiveness can find place in the contemplation of God as the common Creator and Father of man: hence it is that no hymn or psalm in any subsequent age has found a readier response than this first appeal to the whole world to unite in worshipping Jehovah on the ground of a common sonship and humanity.

I.

Praise to God for His might in creation,

O be joyful in Jehovah, all ye lands !	1
serve Jehovah with gladness,	
and come before His presence with a song !	
be ye sure that Jehovah He is God,	2
it is He that hath made us and not we ourselves,	
we are His people and the sheep of His pasture !	

II.

and His loving-kindness towards the children of men.

O go your way into His gates with thanksgiving,	3
and into His courts with praise !	
be thankful unto Him and speak good of His name !	
for the Lord is gracious ; His mercy is everlasting,	4
and His truth endureth from generation to generation !	

§ 113. PSALM LXVII.

¹ Cp. Num.
vi. 24.

HERE we find, as it were, an expansion of the old blessing pronounced in Numbers¹ upon the children of Israel. Like that blessing upon their ancestors, it was probably delivered by a priest; unlike it, it looks far beyond the limits of Judæa and the immediate prosperity of the Hebrew nation. It breathes the sense of a new relation, of duty towards the heathen world, which was the inestimable advantage derived from the freer intercourse with foreigners under the monarchy, and from the severer lessons of subju-

² Cp. Haggai
throughout. gation and captivity².

I.

God be merciful unto us and bless us,	1
and shew us the light of His countenance and be merciful unto us!	
that Thy way may be known upon earth,	2
Thy saving health among all nations!	
Let the people praise Thee, O God!	3
yea, let all the people praise Thee,	
O let the nations rejoice and be glad,	4
for Thou shalt judge the peoples righteously, and govern the nations upon earth!	

II.

Let the peoples praise Thee, O God,	5
yea, let all the peoples praise Thee!	

the earth giveth forth her increase, 6
 let God, even our own God, give us His blessing!
 yea, let God give us His blessing, 7
 and all the ends of the world shall fear Him!

§ 114. PSALM LXVIII.

THE grandest and most elaborate of all the Dedication Odes. As the great procession of the people marches¹ ¹ *v.* 4, 5. up towards Mount Sion, the hearts of all are filled with the thought of their recent deliverance from captivity². As ² *v.* 6. they move onwards, they recite the song of triumph which forms the centre of the Psalm³. Under the imagery of the ³ *v.* 7, 23. earlier Exodus, the victories of the judges and the first removal of the Ark to its hallowed abode under David, God is described as Himself passing in triumph⁴ through the ⁴ *v.* 17. wilderness to seat Himself once more as a conqueror at the head of His victorious hosts on His beloved mountain, ready again to issue forth as from His earthly home to take vengeance on all those who had profanely tried to dispossess Him of His Sanctuary.

As the opening words are a repetition of the old chant with which the Levites accompanied the raising of the Ark when changing their encampment in the wilderness; so the whole Psalm throughout is modelled on the pattern of earlier songs of victory. It seems especially to echo⁵ the notes of ⁵ *v.* 9, 13, the Psalm of Deborah, and can hardly be understood without ^{29.} a reference to that. In fact, allusion to other poems well

known to the hearers but lost to us, seems to afford the only explanation of the almost hopeless obscurity of many parts of the Psalm. The ideas and imagery are the same as those of the second Isaiah⁶.

⁶ xl—lxvi.

The prelude and the conclusion seem to have been chanted by the priests, the central ode by the whole body of the people; though the fourfold division of the latter makes it possible that it was chanted by the representatives of the two pairs of northern and southern tribes, accompanied by the four courses of priests, which alone returned from the exile⁷. The names of Zebulon and Naphtali may have been selected to stand for the whole, from a recollection of the honour which was paid to them in the great

⁷ Cp. Neh. vii. 39—42.

⁸ Judg. v.

utterance of Deborah⁸. That members of the northern tribes accompanied the return of the south, though not specially mentioned, has been inferred from the passages in the book of Ezra, where of the 42,000 of the return, 30,000 alone are assigned to the two southern tribes; from which it has been concluded that the remaining 12,000 belonged to the northern section of the kingdom. That, at all events in idea, the people of Jerusalem considered themselves as the representatives of the whole people and looked upon their city as the holy metropolis of Palestine, is clear from their offering separate sin-offerings for the twelve tribes⁹, and from the special mention of the name of Joseph in some of the Psalms¹⁰.

⁹ Ezra vi. 19.
¹⁰ § 81 Ps. lxxvii (sons of Jacob and Joseph); § 112 Ps. lxxx; § 129 Ps. lxxxix.

That these claims of Jerusalem were recognised even at

an earlier time by the people of the north, appears from the account of the pilgrimage from her once rival cities,—Sichem, Shiloh, and Samaria,—which met with such a tragical fate at the hands of the treacherous Ishmael¹¹. By that time^{11 Jer. xli. 5—8.} they must have acknowledged the very pretensions which they had ‘laughed to scorn’ in the reign of Hezekiah¹².^{12 2 Chron. xxx. 10, 11.}

I.

Praise of God who hath led His people through the wilderness from Babylon,

Let God arise, and His enemies shall be scattered,	1
they also that hate Him shall flee before Him,	
like as the smoke vanisheth away,	2
and like as wax melteth at the fire,	
so shall the ungodly perish at the presence of God;	
but the righteous shall be glad and rejoice before God,	3
they shall also be merry and joyful.	
O sing unto God and sing praises unto His name,	4
make a way for Him that rideth through the wilderness,	
—JAH is His name—and rejoice before Him!	
He is the father of the fatherless, and defendeth the cause of	
the widows,	5
even God in His holy habitation:	
God bringeth home them that are scattered abroad,	6
He freeth the prisoners from captivity and blesseth them,	
but letteth the rebellious dwell in a parched land.	

II.

as He had led their fathers from Egypt by the hand of Moses and Joshua,

O God, when Thou wentest forth before Thy people,	7
when Thou didst march through the wilderness,	

the earth shook, the heavens dropped at the presence of God, 8
even that Sinai shook at the presence of God, who is the
God of Israel.

Thou, O God, sentest a gracious rain on Thine inheritance, 9
and refreshedst it when it was weary.

Thy people hath dwelt therein, 10
for Thou, O God, hast of Thy goodness prepared it for the
poor.

when He slew kings for their sake, and sent hailstones from heaven to destroy them.

The Lord giveth us a song of victory, 11
great is the company of the women that tell it abroad ;

kings with their armies flee and are discomfited, 12
she that tarrieth at home divideth the spoil :

‘when ye rest among the pastures, 13
then are the wings of the dove covered with silver,
and her feathers with shining gold ;

but when the Highest scattereth kings, 14
then is there snow on Salmon.’

Sion hath He chosen for His dwelling, and hath mounted it in triumph,

‘A hill of God is the hill of Basan, 15
even an high hill is the hill of Basan :’

wherefore look ye askance, ye high hills? 16
this is God’s hill where it pleaseth Him to dwell,

yea, Jehovah will abide in it for ever !
‘lo, the chariots of God,—twenty thousand, even thousands on
thousands— 17
the Lord therein—Sinai in the Sanctuary !’

Thou art gone up on high, Thou hast led up a multitude of
captives, 18

Thou hast received gifts of men;
'yea, even His enemies shall rest near Jehovah our God.'

and hath signally delivered His chosen from death.

Blessed be the Lord; even the God who helpeth us, 19
Who doth bear our burdens day by day;

the God who is the God of our salvation, 20
and the Lord Jehovah by whom we escape death:

yea, God will wound the head of His enemies, 21
and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his
wickedness:

the Lord hath said—'I will fetch him again from Basan, 22
I will fetch him again from the deep of the sea,

that thy foot may be dipped with the blood of thine enemies 23
and that the tongue of thy dogs may be red through the
same.'

III.

The priest describeth the procession to the Temple,

It is well seen, O God, how Thou goest, 24
how Thou, my God and King, wentest to the sanctuary;

the singers went before, the minstrels followed after, 25
in the midst were the damsels, playing with the timbrels;

give thanks unto God in the congregation, 26
even the Lord, ye that come of the waters of Israel,

there was little Benjamin their leader, 27
the mighty host, even the princes of Judah,

the princes of Zebulon, and the princes of Naphthali.

and prophesieth that kings shall come there to pay their homage to Jehovah,

Set forth Thy glory, O God! 28
 glorify, O God, the thing which Thou hast wrought for us!
 for Thy Temple's sake at Jerusalem, 29
 let kings bring homage unto Thee!
 rebuke the beast of the reeds, the multitude of bulls with the
 calves—his peoples, 30
 so that they humbly bring pieces of silver;
 yea, scatter Thou the peoples that delight in war;
 then shall princes come out of Egypt 31
 and Ethiopia quickly stretch out her hand unto God.

Who though He be King of Heaven, yet hath His earthly throne in Sion.

Sing unto God, O ye kingdoms of the earth, 32
 sing praises unto the Lord,
 Who rideth through the heaven of heavens which is of old, 33
 —lo, He doth send out His voice, yea, and that a mighty
 voice!—
 ascribe ye power unto God, whose majesty ruleth over Israel 34
 and whose strength is in the clouds!
 Terrible art Thou, O God, from out Thy Sanctuary! 35
 even the God of Israel, He will give strength and power
 unto His people;
 blessed be God!

Ver. 1. *arise*; a quotation from Numbers x. 35.

Vv. 4, 7, 8. Cp. the procession of the ark through the wilderness in Num. x. For the return from Babylon see Is. xxxv. xl. 3; the liberation from captivity is there alluded to in vv. 5, 6.

Vv. 7—9. The meaning appears to be that the same God who revealed Himself in storms on Sinai also revealed Himself in gracious rain, preparing the promised land for the coming of the Israelites. The words are of course taken from Judg. v. 4—6, 30. For the celebration of victories by choruses of

women, see Ex. xv. 20, 1 Sam. xviii. 6, 7. For the division of the spoil, Judg. v. 11.

Vv. 13, 14. Probably a quotation from a song of victory. The allusion is to the play of colour on the wings of a dove. The meaning apparently is, 'When ye (the men of Israel) rest on the soft pastures of Palestine after war, then are the wings of the dove illumined with gold, as the fields are covered with sunshine: still when Jehovah willeth to destroy kings to preserve His inheritance, then doth He send hailstones and snow from heaven:' cp. the battle of Bethhoron under Joshua [x. 11] and Judg. v. 19, 20. The rarity of snow in Palestine caused it to be regarded as an especial wonder. Job xxxviii. 22, "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?"

Ver. 15. *Basan* was bounded on the north by the range of Anti-Libanus: of which Hermon the southern peak was the loftiest and grandest hill in Palestine; it had a claim to be ranked as a 'hill of God,' but He chose the hill of Sion for His residence. For the priority thus bestowed upon Sion cp. § 36 Ps. xlviii. and notes.

Ver. 17. *gone up on high*. God is represented as taking possession of Sion as an earthly conqueror of a conquered citadel, Hab. iii. 8. Here we have extracts from an ancient Psalm.

Sinai—the honours of Sinai are now transferred to Sion, and God and the heavenly train are pictured as moving in triumphal procession thence to Sion and leading His enemies as captives.

Ver. 18. *gifts of men, i. e.* of the rebellious who have become the vassals of Jehovah and do Him homage.

Vv. 22, 23. Again a quotation from some lost Psalm. The meaning is 'Should their enemies in the day of judgment hide in Bashan or in the deep sea, I the Lord will drag them forth:' cp. Am. ix. 3, "I will slay the last of them with the sword, He that sleeth of them shall not flee away."

Ver. 26. *waters of Israel*. The lineage of Israel is likened to the source of a river, cp. Is. xlviii. 1, li. 1, possibly Deut. xxxiii. 28.

Ver. 28. A prayer that God will manifest His glory from this His newly-consecrated Temple as He had of old from the Temple of Solomon.

Ver. 29. Under the image of the king of the jungle, surrounded by bisons and calves, is typified the great Persian king, with his train of satraps and subject peoples. So the king of Babylon is typified by the dragons of the river or crocodile, § 120 Ps. lxxiv. 14, Ezek. xxix. 3.

§ 115. PSALM XLVII.

¹ v. 5. **A** PSALM composed for the dedication of the Temple,
and sung during the procession¹.

I.

Invitation to all lands to praise Jehovah,

O clap your hands together, all ye peoples, 1

O sing unto God with the voice of melody!
for Jehovah is high and to be feared, 2

He is the great King over all the earth;
He subdueth the peoples under us, 3
and the nations under our feet.

He chooseth out an heritage for us, 4
even Jacob's glory which He loved.

II.

Whose earthly throne is at Sion,

God is gone up with a merry noise, 5

Jehovah with the sound of a trumpet;
O sing praises, sing praises unto our God, 6

O sing praises, sing praises unto our King!
for God is the King of all the earth; 7

O sing unto Him a glorious song.
God reigneth over the heathen, 8
God sitteth upon His holy seat!

III.

where chieftains do Him homage, for He is the King of kings.

The princes of the peoples have gathered themselves together
at the Temple of the God of Abraham;
for the shields of the earth belong unto God, 9
and He is highly exalted!

Ver. 4. Cp. § 49 lxi. 6, *Jacob's glory, i. e.* the Holy Land. Cp. Ez. xx. 15, "That I would bring them into the land which I had given them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands."

Ver. 5. *is gone up.* Cp. § 114 Ps. lxxiii. 18, and Introduction.

Ver. 9. Cp. Is. xiv. 1. The princes probably were Persian emissaries, but the precise facts are unknown.

shields, i. e. chiefs. The word is rendered 'rulers,' Hos. iv. 18.

§ 116. PSALM LXVI. 1—11.

THE first¹ part of this Psalm is another echo of the feelings of the nation at this epoch, in which they seemed to be living over again the times of the great deliverances under Moses.

¹ For the 2nd part, see § 30.

I.

An appeal to all nations to recognise God's power.

O be joyful in God, all ye lands!	1
sing praises unto the honour of His name,	
make His praise to be glorious!	
say unto God, 'Oh, how wonderful art Thou in Thy works! 2	
through the greatness of Thy power Thine enemies feign	
obedience unto Thee :	
all the world doth worship Thee, sing of Thee	3
and praise Thy Name !'	

II.

As from Egypt of yore, so now

O come hither and behold the works of God,	4
how wonderful He is in His doing toward the children of	
men !	

He turned the sea into dry land, 5
 so that they went through the water on foot;
 there did we rejoice in Him.
 He ruleth with His power for ever; 6
 His eyes behold the peoples,
 and such as will not obey Him are not able to exalt themselves.

III.

He hath delivered us from captivity and slavery.

O praise our God, ye peoples, 7
 and make the voice of His praise to be heard!
 Who hath held our soul in life 8
 and suffered not our feet to slip!
 for Thou, O God, hast proved us, 9
 Thou hast tried us like as silver is tried.
 'Thou broughtest us into the net 10
 and laidest a sore burden upon our loins;
 'Thou sufferedst men to ride over our heads, 11
 we went through fire and water,
 and Thou broughtest us out into a place of freedom.

Ver. 2. *feign obedience*, or pay Thee court. Cp. 'were found liars,' Deut. xxxiii. 29.

Thine enemies, the Heathen, comprised in 'all the world,' or all nations, ver. 3.

Ver. 10. *into the net*, or snare, so as to be the prey of the enemies' hand, hence into captivity. Hos. vii. 12.

a burden on our loins, made us like beasts of burden, *i. e.* brought us into slavery.

Ver. 11. Cp. Is. li. 23, "They that afflict thee have said to thy soul, 'bow down that we may go over,' and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, as the street for them that went over."

§§ 117, 118. THE EFFECT OF THE CAPTIVITY UPON
THE NATIONAL CHARACTER. PSALMS XCI, CXXXIX.

THE destruction and the restoration of the Temple brought with them, each its own great lesson. Aver-
sion to idolatry¹ as the cause of their degradation was the effect of the dispersion; the feelings awakened by
their return naturally rekindled the fervour of their religious
enthusiasm, and issued in a new and fresh flow of exult-
ing faith and confidence in Jehovah.

¹ Cp. § 102
Ps. xcvi. and
Introduction
to Period IV.

As David poured out his heart in the first flood tide of gratitude to God² for His protection and in his newly
formed resolution to undertake all his work in Jehovah's
name and as Jehovah's vicgerent, so the Psalmist of the
restoration pours forth his thankfulness with a freshness
of feeling and a nobleness of language, which have made
these two Psalms for all time the amplest exhibition of
faith in God's protection amid danger—and of man's belief
in that inscrutable connexion between himself and his Maker
which is the true source at once of his humility and of
his dignity.

These Psalms are, so to speak, the mirror which re-
flects the permanent effect of the restoration upon the
national character. They contain no new truths. Pro-
phet and Psalmist have often before uttered words as
comforting and truths as elevated; but now these words
and these truths have struck root in the general belief. The

² Ps. ci.

people see in the restoration a fresh and most signal confirmation of them ; and the Psalmist of this period proclaims them anew with a conviction so deep and a power so irresistible, that they acquire in this statement, as it were, a new reality. It is no longer the words of Jehovah, addressed by His servants to the nation ; it is rather the word of Jehovah, sunk into the nation's heart, intertwined with its inmost thoughts and deepest experiences, and now reappearing in the words of the Psalmist, their mouthpiece, as at once the record of his and their firm faith, and the utterance as of an oracle for their daily guidance and warning. Upon this calm and blissful height of unwavering faith the Psalmist stands ; the consciousness of God's presence has become an abiding reality, by which the very language of human thought and feeling is invested and transfigured with a celestial radiance and glory.

§ 117. PSALM XCI.

I.

The Psalmist addressing his soul declareth the safety of all who trust in God ;

Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the most High,	1
shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty:	
I will say unto Jehovah, Thou art my refuge and my strong-	
hold,	2
my God, in Him will I trust.	
‘For He shall deliver thee from the snare of the hunter,	3
and from the noisome pestilence ;	

He shall defend thee under His wings, 4
and thou shalt be safe under His feathers :
His faithfulness and truth shall be thy shield and buckler.
Thou shalt not be afraid for any terror by night, 5
nor for the arrow that flieth by day,
for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, 6
nor for the sickness that destroyeth in the noonday ;
a thousand shall fall beside thee and ten thousand at thy right
hand : 7
but it shall not come nigh thee ;
only with thine eyes shalt thou behold 8
and see the reward of the ungodly.'

II.

he again addresseth his soul

For Thou, Jehovah, art my refuge ; 9
'thou hast chosen the most High for thine house of
defence ;
there shall no evil happen unto thee, 10
neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling ;
but He shall give His angels charge over thee 11
to keep thee in all thy ways,
they shall bear thee in their hands, 12
that thou hurt not thy foot against a stone ;
thou shalt go upon the lion and adder, 13
the young lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy
feet.

in the words of Jehovah.

Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver
him, 14
I will set him up, because he hath known My Name ;

he shall call upon Me and I will hear him, 15
 yea, I am with him in trouble,
 I will deliver him and bring him to honour,
 with long life will I satisfy him 16
 and shew him My salvation.'

Jehovah speaking of him in his 3rd person.

Vv. 1—3. The person described in ver. 1 as living under the protection of Jehovah is the Psalmist himself, as ver. 2 shews. For the change from 3rd to 1st, and afterwards (ver. 9) to the 2nd person, cp. Job xii. 4. *thee*, ver. 3, *i. e.* the Psalmist. *defence of the most High, i. e.* Sion.

Ver. 8. Thou shalt be so far removed from it as not to feel it, but only to see it at a distance.

Ver. 9. For the change of persons, cp. note, ver. 1. Thou, Jehovah—thou, O my soul, hast chosen, &c.

Vv. 14—16. A sudden transition. *he, i. e.* the Psalmist, as *thou*, v. 9, is also 'the Psalmist.'

§ 118. PSALM CXXXIX.

I.

Jehovah, Thou hast searched me out and known me! 1
 yea, Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising,
 Thou understandest my thoughts long before,
 Thou art about my path and about my bed, 2
 and spiest out all my ways:
 for lo! the word is not yet upon my tongue— 3
 but Thou, Jehovah, knowest it altogether;
 Thou hast compassed me behind and before 4
 and laid Thine hand upon me.
 Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me, 5
 I cannot attain unto it!

II.

Whither shall I go then from Thy spirit? 6
 or whither shall I go then from Thy presence?

if I climb up into heaven, Thou art there, 7
 if I go down into hell, Thou art there also!
 if I take the wings of the morning 8
 and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea,
 even there shall Thy hand lead me 9
 and Thy right hand shall hold me!
 if I say, 'peradventure the darkness shall cover me 10
 and the day be turned into night about me,'
 even then the darkness is no darkness with Thee, 11
 but the night is as clear as the day,
 the darkness and light to Thee are both alike!

III.

For my reins are the work of Thine hand, 12
 Thou hast formed me in my mother's womb,
 I will give thanks unto Thee, for I am fearfully and wonder-
 fully made, 13
 marvellous are Thy works,—
 and that my soul knoweth right well!
 my bones were not hid from Thee, 14
 when I was made secretly
 and fashioned beneath in the earth:
 Thine eyes did see my substance yet being imperfect, 15
 and in Thy book were all my days written,
 yea, the days were already ordered, when as yet there was
 none of them. 16
 How manifold are Thy thoughts—they overwhelm me, O
 God; 17
 O how great is the sum of them!
 if I tell them, they are more in number than the sand; 18
 when I wake up, I am present with Thee.

IV.

Wilt Thou not slay the wicked, O God!	19
depart from me, ye bloodthirsty men!	
for they speak unrighteously against Thee,	20
and take Thy covenant wickedly in their mouth!	
Should not I hate them that hate Thee, O Jehovah?	21
should not I be grieved with those that rise up against Thee?	
yea, I hate them right sore,	22
I have counted them mine enemies!	
Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart,	23
prove me and examine my thoughts!	
look well if there be any way of wickedness in me,	24
and lead me in the way everlasting!	

Ver. 8. *parts of the sea, i. e.* if like the first ray of the rising sun which darts across to the far west, I flee to the utmost horizon on the sea. 'The sea,' *i. e.* 'the west,' in all the Scriptures which were written in Palestine.

Ver. 10. If I reach the far west—the land of sunset and darkness—and the day be turned into night.

Ver. 11. Cp. Job xxvi. 6, "Hell is naked before Him and destruction hath no covering," and Job xxxiv. 21, 22.

Vv. 14, 15. Cp. Job x. 8—11. '*my days*,' literally 'they all.'

Ver. 17. *thoughts of God, i. e.* His counsels in the creation and government of the universe, which are ever-present and overwhelming both in number and in weight. 'How heavy are Thy thoughts' is the literal rendering of the first line of the verse.

Ver. 20. Cp. § 59 Ps. l. 16.

§§ 119—126. PSALMS XLIV, LXXIV, LXXIX, LXXX,
CXXXII, LXXXIX, LX I—5, 10—12, LXXXV, LXXXIII.

THIS group of Psalms expresses the anguish and perplexity which had overtaken the Jews in a moment of expected triumph; and though from the scantiness of contemporaneous historical records it is no longer possible to trace the details, it is still easy to gather from the general language the outline of a distinct picture.

Zerubbabel and the high priest Jeshua had fulfilled the high hopes entertained of them alike by prophet¹ and by people, not only by rebuilding the walls but by uniting the citizens in the true bond of obedience to God and observance of His religion. It was but natural then that they should see in this the approach of that glorious time, when the true Israel should dwell in the city of David, amid security and blessing such as since David's time had never been known.

But the expected blessings came not. Not even the prince of the house of David, to whose pen two Psalms² from this group are due, could address Jehovah in other than a dejected tone. Dejection characterizes the first³; but in the second⁴ actual miseries, defeat in war and the conquest of the city and the Temple, are depicted with a despair which would not be comforted. Other⁵ Psalms, probably from other pens, complete the picture of desolation, not

¹ Haggai ii. 20—21; Zech. iii. 8; iv. vi. 9—15.

² §§ 123, 124 Ps. lxxxix, cxxxii.

³ § 123 Ps. cxxxii.

⁴ § 124 Ps. lxxxix.

⁵ Ps. xlv, lx, lxxix, lxxx, lxxxi —lxxxv.

only in the land but in the Holy City, nay even in the very Temple and the house of prayer.

How long this desolation lasted, we cannot tell. Nchemiah speaks of the walls and the gates of Jerusalem as dismantled even in his day ; and there is little doubt that the very loyalty of the Jews to Jehovah and the religion of their forefathers, which tended to preserve their national existence, at the same time by rousing the jealousy of the Persian Court directly conduced to their continued oppression.

§ 119. PSALM XLIV.

I.

Israel in memory of former blessings,

We have heard with our ears, O God,	1
our fathers have told us,	
what Thou hast done in their time,	
in the time of old :	
how Thou hast driven out the heathen with Thy hand but	
planted <i>them</i> in,	2
how Thou hast destroyed the nations but spread <i>them</i>	
abroad ;	
for they gat not the land in possession through their own	
sword,	3
neither was it their own arm that helped them ;	
but Thy right hand and Thine arm and the light of Thy	
countenance,	4
because Thou hadst a favour unto them.	
Thou art my King, O God !	5
send help unto Jacob !	

through Thee will we overthrow our enemies, 6
 and in Thy name will we tread them under that rise up
 against us ;
 for I will not trust in my bow, 7
 it is not my sword that shall help me,
 but it is Thou that savedst us from our enemies 8
 and didst put them to confusion that hate us ;
 we made our boast of God all day long, 9
 and praise Thy name for ever !

II.

complaineth of the present evils,

But now Thou hast cast us off and put us to confusion 10
 and goest not forth with our armies ;
 Thou makest us to turn our backs before our enemies, 11
 so that they which hate us spoil our goods ;
 Thou lettest us be eaten up like sheep 12
 and hast scattered us among the heathen ;
 Thou sellest Thy people for nought 13
 and takest no money for them ;
 Thou makest us to be rebuked of our neighbours, 14
 a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.
 Thou makest us to be a byword among the heathen, 15
 so that the peoples shake their heads at us ;
 my confusion is daily before me, 16
 and the shame of my face hath covered me,
 for the voice of the slanderer and blasphemer, 17
 for the enemy and bloodthirsty man !

III.

and professing faithfulness, crieth unto God for succour.

Though all this be come upon us, yet do we not forget Thee, 18
 neither have we dealt falsely in Thy covenant,

our heart is not turned back, 19
 neither our steps gone out of Thy way,
 no, not when Thou hast smitten us in the place of jackals, 20
 and covered us with the shadow of death!
 if we have forgotten the Name of our God, 21
 and holden up our hands to any strange god,
 shall not God search it out,
 for He knoweth the very secrets of the heart?
 nay, for Thy sake we are killed all the day long; 22
 and are counted as sheep appointed to be slain!
 Up, Lord, why sleepest Thou? 23
 awake and be not absent from us for ever!
 wherefore hidest Thou Thy face, 24
 and forgettest our misery and trouble?
 for our soul is brought low, even to the dust, 25
 our belly cleaveth unto the ground:
 arise and help us, 26
 and deliver us for Thy mercies' sake!

Ver. 2. *them*, i. e. our forefathers.

spread them abroad, i. e. extended their borders. Cp. § 122 Ps. lxxx. 8—11.

Ver. 13. *for nought*. Cp. for the expression Jer. xv. 13, 'without price.'

Ver. 15. Cp. Jer. xviii. 16.

Ver. 20. Cp. Jer. ix. 11 and x. 22; the *place of jackals* (A. V. 'den of dragons'), is the symbol of desolation. Cp. Is. xxxiv. 13.

§ 120. PSALM LXXIV.

THE misery of the Jews is here at its deepest; the Holy Place of the Temple was defiled by the banners of the heathen¹; its new decorations were ruthlessly^{1 v. 5.} destroyed²; the Prophets had succumbed to the persecu-^{2 v. 7.} tion³; the enemy stood scoffing⁴ by; the very caverns^{5 3 v. 10.} which shou'd have afforded them refuge were in the hands^{4 Neh. vi. 14.} of their foes.^{5 v. 21.}

If any drop of bitterness were still wanting to fill their cup of misery, it was to be found in the thought of the contrast presented by this partial deliverance from Babylon^{6 Cp. 2v. 11, 12 with 7v.} with the triumphant and marvellous Exodus of their fore-^{13-16.} fathers from Egypt⁷. The very thought of God's omni-^{7 Neh. ix.} potence suggested to them the fearful misgiving that they were no longer the favoured objects of His protection.

I.

The prophet complaineth of the desolation of the sanctuary;

O God, wherefore art Thou absent from us so long? 1
 why is Thy wrath so hot against the sheep of Thy pasture?
 O think upon the congregation which Thou hast purchased of
 old 2
 and redeemed to be the tribe of Thine inheritance, 3
 and upon mount Sion, wherein Thou hast dwelt!
 lift up Thy feet that Thou mayest utterly destroy all evil doings; 4
 the enemy hath done evil in the sanctuary!
 Thine adversaries roared in the midst of Thy congregation, 5
 and set up their banners for tokens;

even as though a man should lay to his hand 6
to hew timber out of the thick trees,
so now with axes and hammers 7
they break down all the carved work thereof;
they have cast fire into Thy holy place, 8
and have defiled the dwelling-place of Thy Name even
unto the ground,
yea, they said in their hearts, 'let us make havoc of them
altogether!' 9
they burnt up all the houses of God in the land;
we see not our tokens, 10
there is not one prophet more,
neither is there among us any that knoweth 'how long?'

II.

he moveth God to help, by appealing to His deliverances of old,

O God, how long shall the adversary do this dishonour? 11
how long shall the enemy blaspheme Thy Name, for ever?
why withdrawest Thou Thy hand, even Thy right hand? 12
pluck it out of Thy bosom and destroy them!
for God is my King of old, 13
the help that is done upon earth He doeth it Himself.
THOU didst divide the sea through Thy power, 14
THOU brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters,
THOU smotest the heads of the Leviathan in pieces, 15
and gavest him to be meat for a people of the wilderness.
THOU broughtest out fountains and waters out of the hard
rock, 16
THOU driedst up mighty waters;
the day is Thine and the night is Thine, 17
THOU hast prepared the light and the sun,

THOU hast set all the borders of the earth, 18
THOU hast made summer and winter!

III.

*and by recounting the blasphemy of His enemies, the oppression of His children,
and His covenant.*

Remember this; how the enemy hath rebuked Jehovah, 19
and foolish people blaspheme Thy Name;
O deliver not the soul of Thy turtle-dove to the multitude
of the robbers, 20
and forget not the multitude of Thy poor for ever!
look upon the Covenant: 21
for the hiding-places of the earth are full of cruel habi-
tations!
O let not the oppressed go away ashamed, 22
but let the poor and needy give praise unto Thy Name!
Arise, O God! maintain Thine own cause, 23
remember how the foolish man blasphemeth Thee daily!
forget not the voice of Thine enemies, 24
the tumult of them that hate Thee increaseth ever more
and more!

Ver. 5. *roared*, cp. Lam. ii. 7.

Vv. 5 and 10. *tokens*. The symbols which the Israelites knew were the Cherubim. These the heathen destroyed and set up their own instead.

Ver. 9. *houses of God*, i. e. houses of prayer. Cp. Introduction to Period IV.

Ver. 10. *knoweth*. For the description of the Jewish people in this last stage of decay cp. Is. vi. 11, five times repeated in the New Testament (Matt. xiii. 13; Mark iv. 12; Luke viii. 10; John xii. 39; Acts xxviii. 25), cp. also Lam. ii. 9.

how long? Cp. § 121 Ps. lxxix. 5. As the Prophet addressed this wayward generation his spirit sank within him, and he asked, 'Lord, how long?' In the answer to this question was contained at once the darker and the brighter

side of the future,—the judgments of prophecy and the great deliverance to which those judgments would lead. Cp. note § 63 Ps. lxxii.

Ver. 12. *pluck it out.* Cp. Is. li. 9, 10, "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old; Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab and wounded the dragon? Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?"

dragons. The crocodile is symbolical of the power of the princes of Egypt; so 'the beast of the reeds' (§ 114 Ps. lxxviii. 30 and note) is symbolical of the king of Assyria.

Ver. 15. *meat for a people of the wilderness,* 'the Ethiopians,' LXX. Allusion is made to the legends of the monster, which was chained by God, whose remnants served for food to the semihuman creatures which inhabited the ends of the world. Cp. the Greek accounts of the Ichthyophagi. Cp. also 2 Esdras vi. 51—59: where the legend of the Leviathan and Behemoth is given. Others however explain it of the wild animals feeding on the dead bodies of the Egyptians cast up from the sea.

Vv. 17, 18 contain a general expression of the beneficent power of God. Cp. Is. xlii. 15, xlv. 27, Job xxviii. 10.

Ver. 21. *hiding-places, i. e.* refuges or asylums, called 'houses of God' in ver. 9, which should be for the protection of God's people but which have fallen into the possession of the heathen and are full of their violence and cruelty.

§ 121. PSALM LXXIX,

IS written in the same period of distress; the city is
¹ v. 1. desolate¹ and the whole nation² subject to a bitter
² v. 12. thralldom from their heathen³ oppressors. The tone is one
³ v. 6. of exceeding bitterness, naturally called forth by their sufferings and their apparent desertion by God and enhanced
⁴ v. 9. by the sense that at the very moment of their struggle to rise⁴
 above their sins and to maintain the religion of Israel, God
⁵ v. 5. was exacting from them in unrelenting anger⁵ the penalty
⁶ v. 8. for the iniquity of their forefathers⁶.

I.

The Psalmist complaineth of the desolation of Jerusalem;

O God, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance, 1
 Thy holy Temple have they defiled,
 and made Jerusalem a heap of stones;
 the dead bodies of Thy servants have they given 2
 to be meat unto the fowls of the air,
 and the flesh of Thy saints unto the beasts of the land:
 their blood have they shed like water 3
 on every side of Jerusalem, and there was no man to
 bury them;
 we are become a reproach to our neighbours, 4
 a very scorn and derision to them that are round about us.
 How long, O Jehovah—? wilt Thou be angry for ever? 5
 shall Thy jealousy burn like fire?

II.

he prayeth for vengeance on the enemy, and deliverance for Israel,

Pour out Thine indignation upon the heathen that have not
 known Thee, 6
 and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon Thy
 Name,
 for they have devoured Jacob 7
 and laid waste his dwelling-place!
 O remember not against us the sins of our fathers! 8
 but have mercy upon us and that soon,
 for we are come to great misery;
 help us, O God of our salvation, 9
 for the glory of Thy Name,
 O deliver us and be merciful unto our sins,
 for Thy Name's sake!

wherefore should the heathen say : ' where is now their God ? ' 10
 O let the vengeance of Thy servants' blood that is shed 11
 be openly shewed upon the heathen in our sight !

III.

and promiseth thankfulness.

O let the sorrowful sighing of the prisoners come before Thee, 12
 according to the greatness of Thy power preserve Thou
 those that are appointed to die.
 and for the blasphemy wherewith our neighbours have blas-
 phemed Thee 13
 reward Thou them, O Lord, sevenfold into their bosom !
 so we that are Thy people and sheep of Thy pasture 14
 shall give Thee thanks for ever,
 and will alway be shewing forth Thy praise from generation
 to generation !

Ver. 6. Cp. Jer. x. 25.

Ver. 10. Cp. Joel ii. 17.

Ver. 12. *prisoners*, i. e. the whole nation.

§ 122. PSALM LXXX.

A LONG and pathetic appeal to the mercy of God, in strong contrast to the preceding Psalm. The tone of imprecation common to the period appears only in one parenthetical clause¹, while the rest of the Psalm is taken up with a recital of God's fostering care in translating His people from Egypt to Palestine and tending them, as a husbandman, his tender vine ; a figure engraven on the memory of the nation by the touching and exquisite imagery of the Prophets².

¹ v. 16.

² Jer. ii. ; Is. v. ; Ezek. xv, xvii.

I.

An appeal to God,

Hear, O Thou shepherd of Israel! 1
 Thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep,
 Thou that sittest between the Cherubim, shine forth!
 before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasses 2
 stir up Thy strength
 and come and help us!
Turn us again, O God, 3
shew the light of Thy countenance and we shall be whole!

II.

who was grievously afflicting them,

O Jehovah, God of Hosts, 4
 how long wilt Thou be angry with Thy people that prayeth?
 Thou feedest them with the bread of tears, 5
 and givest them plenteousness of tears to drink;
 Thou hast made us a very strife unto our neighbours 6
 and our enemies laugh us to scorn.
Turn us again, Thou God of Hosts, 7
shew the light of Thy countenance and we shall be whole.

III.

while He had dealt lovingly with their forefathers;

Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt, 8
 Thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it;
 Thou madest room for it, 9
 and when it had taken root, it filled the land;
 the hills were covered with the shadow of it, 10
 and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedar trees;
 she stretched out her branches unto the sea 11
 and her boughs unto the river.
 Why hast Thou then broken down her hedge, 12
 that all they that go by pluck off her grapes,

the wild boar out of the wood doth root it up 13
and the wild beasts of the field devour it?

Turn Thee again, Thou God of Hosts, 14
look down from heaven, behold
and visit this vine!

forasmuch as the vine, that Thy right hand hath planted 15
and the branch that Thou madest so strong for Thyself
is burnt with fire and cut down, 16

(let them perish at the rebuke of Thy countenance)
so let Thy hand be upon the man of Thy right hand 17
and upon the son of man whom Thou madest so strong
for Thyself!

and so will we not go back from Thee. 18

O let us live and we shall call upon Thy Name!

Turn us again, Jehovah, God of Hosts, 19
shew the light of Thy countenance and we shall be whole!

Vv. 1 and 2. The division into tribes had long ceased and Sion included the whole of Israel. These names therefore stand here merely for old and famous portions of the nation. At the same time the mention of Joseph three times, § 81 Ps. lxxvii. 15, § 129 Ps. lxxxi. 5, and here, can hardly be accidental. The presence of representatives from the dwellers in the northern tribes at this dedication may probably be inferred. Cp. § 114 Ps. lxviii. 27.

Cherubim. Cp. § 69 Ps. xxii. 3 and note.

Ver. 2. *before Ephraim.* In the order of the ancient march the rear of the Ark was guarded by the warrior tribes of Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh, the brother and sons of Joseph. Numbers ii. 18—22.

Vv. 3, 7, 19. This burden is sung by the whole congregation.

Ver. 11. To the Mediterranean sea on the West, and to the Euphrates on the East. This expression, here and § 124 Ps. lxxxix. 26, is taken from § 63 Ps. lxxii. 8.

Ver. 17. Let Thy hand be upon this *vine*—this *man*—*us* the congregation of Israel to protect and deliver them.

§ 123. PSALM CXXXII.

FILLED with the memory of many an ancient oracle¹ ^{1 2 Sam. vii.}
 in praise of David and his city Sion, unable to bear
 the thought that this ‘beauty of all the earth²,’ for which ^{2 Cp. § 36 Ps. xlviii. 2.}
 David had toiled³, should remain sunk in misery and ruin, ^{3 v. 2.}
 the Psalmist offers a prayer to God to remember His pro-
 mises and to return once more to His chosen dwelling-
 place. Himself a prince⁴ of the house of David,—may be, ^{4 v. 10.}
 the great prince of the house of Judah⁵, Zerubbabel, ‘whose ^{5 Ezra i. 5.}
 spirit God had stirred to go up to build the house of the
 Lord,’—he sees in the successful rebuilding of the Temple
 and the re-establishment⁶ of the national worship an as- ^{6 v. 9, 16.}
 surance of the renewal of God’s favour to the holy resting-
 place⁷, with which the voice of prophecy had so indissolubly ^{7 v. 14.}
 linked the destiny of his house.

I.

*God's promise to David is now fulfilled by the joyous call from North to South to
 visit the Temple,*

O Jehovah! remember David	1
and all his trouble;	
how he sware unto Jehovah,	2
and vowed a vow unto the Almighty God of Jacob:	
‘I will not come within the tabernacle of mine house,	3
nor climb up into my bed,	
I will not suffer mine eyes to sleep,	4
nor mine eyelids to slumber,	
until I find out a place for the Temple of Jehovah,	5
an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob!’	

and lo! we heard this saying at Ephrata, 6
we found it in the regions of the forest;
'let us go into His tabernacle 7
and fall low on our knees before His footstool!'

II.

which the Psalmist prayeth Jehovah to visit once again;

Arise, Jehovah, into Thy resting-place, 8
Thou and the ark of Thy strength!
let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness, 9
and let Thy saints shout for joy!
for Thy servant David's sake, 10
turn not away the face of Thine Anointed!
Jehovah hath made a faithful oath unto David 11
and He shall not shrink from it:
'of the fruit of thy body
shall I set upon thy seat!
if thy children will keep My covenant 12
and My testimonies that I shall teach them,
their children also shall sit
upon thy seat for evermore.'

III.

for Sion is the seat of Jehovah, where David's seed shall never cease to reign.

For Jehovah hath chosen Sion for Himself, 13
He hath longed for her as His habitation;
'this shall be My rest for ever, 14
here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein;
I will bless her victuals with increase, 15
and satisfy her poor with bread,
I will deck her priests with health, 16
and her saints shall rejoice and sing;

there will I make the horn of David to flourish, 17
 I will ordain a lantern for Mine Anointed,
 as for his enemies, I will clothe them with shame, 18
 but upon himself shall his crown flourish !

Ver. 6. *Ephrata*, the older and more solemn name for Bethlehem, here signifies the South, as the *forest*—Libanon, the great forest of Canaan, (called here, as Is. xxii. 8, xxix. 17, simply the forest) signifies the North. So the whole connexion is, 'and his vow (vv. 2—5) was not in vain; for we, his people, heard from North to South the joyous invitation to come to the Temple at Sion.'

Ver. 9. *righteousness*, i. e. the results of righteousness or blessing. Cp. § 4 Ps. xxiv. 5.

Ver. 10. *turn not away*, i. e. reject not the prayer of the Prince, Thy servant, who addresseth Thee: cp. 2 Chron. vi. 42, "Lord God, turn not away the face of Thine anointed; remember the mercies of David Thy servant." Cp. also marginal reference to 1 Kings ii. 16.

Ver. 16. *health*, i. e. the divine blessing.

Ver. 17. *horn*, cp. Ezek. xxix. 21, "In that day I will cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth."

For the *lantern*, or lamp, or candle, or light, of Israel cp. 1 Kings xi. 36, xv. 4, 2 Sam. xxi. 17, cp. also § 12 Ps. xviii. 28 and note.

124. PSALM LXXXIX.

THE same¹ oracular promise to David and to Sion,¹ 2 Sam. vii. which dictated the preceding Psalm, inspires the Psalmist in this. It underlies the main² or historical portion² vv. 20—36. of the Psalm, and in many verses reappears³ almost³ Cp. 27. 23, 27, 30, 31—33, 34 with 2 Sam. vii. 10—16. word for word. The time of its composition was one of more than ordinary trouble, even in that troublous age; and probably the same⁴ prince of the house of David⁴ vv. 37—44 and v. 50. seeks refuge amid the raging storm in clinging⁵ to Jeho-⁵ vv. 1—19.

⁶ vv. 20—36. vah, the especial protector of his race and in recounting⁶ the promise, which He had given by the mouth of His Prophets, that that protection should be continued for ever.

⁷ vv. 37—50. In the last⁷ division of the Psalm, he falls into language of bitterness and despair,—short, broken utterances, almost sobs,—at the misery of the time and the personal ill treatment, to which he had been subject. It is remarkable how in the picture here given, the misery of the prince, the Anointed of Jehovah, is mixed up and blended with that of the city and nation. The two were in fact

⁸ Cp. § 63 Ps. lxxii. note, *ad finem.* connected by an indissoluble⁸ bond. It is no wonder then that the language passes by an easy and almost imperceptible transition from the one to the other; the weal and woe of Sion's prince are spoken of as identical with the weal and woe of Sion herself.

I.

From the misery of the time the Psalmist takes refuge in the praise of God, the faithful protector of David, and in the happiness of Israel as His chosen people.

My song shall be alway of the loving-kindness of Jehovah, 1
 with my mouth will I ever be shewing Thy truth from one
 generation to another, 2
 for I have said, 'mercy shall be set up for ever,
 Thy truth shalt Thou stablish in the heavens!'
 'I have made a covenant with My Chosen, 3
 I have sworn unto David My servant;
 thy seed will I stablish for ever, 4
 and set up thy throne from one generation to another!'

O Jehovah ! the very heavens shall praise Thy wondrous works, 5
and Thy truth in the congregation of the saints.

For who is he among the clouds that shall be compared unto
Jehovah? 6

and what is he among the gods that shall be likened to
Jehovah? 7

God is greatly to be feared in the council of the saints, 8
and to be had in reverence above all them that are round
about Him.

O Jehovah, God of Hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto Thee,
O Jehovah? 9

or to Thy faithfulness round about Thee?

Thou rulest the raging of the sea, 10

Thou stillest the waves thereof when they arise ;

Thou smotest Rahab like unto one that is slain, 11

Thou hast scattered Thine enemies abroad with Thy mighty
arm ;

the heavens are Thine, the earth also is Thine, 12

Thou hast laid the foundations of the round world and all
that therein is,

Thou hast made the north and the south, 13

Tabor and Hermon rejoice in Thy Name ;

Thou hast a mighty arm, 14

strong is Thy hand and high is Thy right hand.

Righteousness and equity are the foundation of Thy seat, 15

mercy and truth go before Thy face.

Blessed is the people, O Jehovah, that knoweth the joyful sound, 16

that walketh in the light of Thy countenance ;

their delight is daily in Thy Name, 17

and in Thy righteousness do they make their boast ;

for Thou art the glory of their strength, 18
and in Thy loving-kindness Thou shalt lift up our horns,
for our defence is from Jehovah, 19
from the Holy One of Israel is our King.

II.

How God chose David to be His king and promised an everlasting dominion to his seed,

Thou spakest sometime in visions to Thy holy one 20
and saidst, 'I have laid help upon one that is mighty,
I have exalted one chosen out of the people,
I have found David My servant, 21
with My holy oil have I anointed him,
My hand shall hold him fast, 22
and My arm shall strengthen him ;
the enemy shall not be able to do him violence, 23
the son of wickedness shall not hurt him,
I will smite down his foes before his face 24
and plague them that hate him,
My truth also and My mercy shall be with him, 25
and in My Name shall his horn be exalted ;
I will set his dominion also over the sea, 26
and his right hand over the floods ;
he shall call Me ; 'Thou art my father, 27
my God and the rock of my salvation !'
and I will make him My firstborn, 28
higher than the kings of the earth,
My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, 29
and My covenant shall stand fast with him ;
his seed also will I make to endure for ever 30
and his throne as the days of heaven :

but if his children forsake My law 31
 and walk not in My judgments,
 if they break My statutes 32
 and keep not My commandments,
 I will visit their offences with the rod,
 and their sin with scourges ;
 nevertheless My loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, 33
 nor suffer My truth to fail,
 My covenant will I not break, 34
 nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips ;
 I have sworn once by My Holiness,
 —I will not fail David !—
 his seed shall endure for ever 35
 and his throne is like as the sun before Me,
 it shall stand fast for evermore as the moon, 36
 and as the faithful witness in heaven.'

III.

and yet He has plunged that seed into hopeless misery.

But Thou hast abhorred and forsaken, 37
 'Thou hast been wroth with Thine Anointed,
 Thou hast broken the covenant of Thy servant, 38
 and cast his crown to the ground,
 Thou hast overthrown all his hedges, 39
 and broken down his strong holds ;
 all they that go by spoil him, 40
 and he is become a reproach to his neighbours ;
 Thou hast set up the right hand of his enemies, 41
 and made all his adversaries to rejoice,
 Thou hast taken away the edge of his sword, 42
 and givest him not victory in the battle ;

Thou hast put out his glory, 43
 and cast his throne down to the ground,
 the days of his youth Thou hast shortened, 44
 and covered him with dishonour!
 Jehovah! how long wilt Thou hide Thyself, for ever? 45
 and shall Thy wrath burn like fire?
 Oh, remember how short my time is, 46
 and how Thou hast made all men for nought!
 what man is he that liveth and shall not see death, 47
 and shall deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?
 Lord, where are Thy old loving-kindnesses, 48
 which Thou swarest unto David in Thy truth?
 remember, Lord, the rebuke that Thy servants have, 49
 —and how I do bear in my bosom many peoples,—
 wherewith Thine enemies blaspheme Thee, O Jehovah, 50
 and slander the footsteps of Thine Anointed.

Ver. 11. *Rahab*, cp. § 99 Ps. lxxxvii. 4, and note.

Ver. 13. *Tabor and Hermon*; the most striking monuments of God's power among the natural features of Palestine.

Ver. 16. *the joyful sound*, *i. e.* the sound of the trumpet at Thy festivals; cp. Lev. xxiii. 24, Num. x. 10.

Ver. 20. *Thy holy one*, *i. e.* Nathan, the holy one of Jehovah, cp. 1 Chron. xvii. 15, 2 Sam. vii. 17.

Ver. 23. *shall not be able to do him violence*, *i. e.* as a creditor to a debtor who cannot pay his debt. This is an allusion to the state of debt and distress in which the Jews at this time were sunk.

Vv. 27, 31—33. Cp. 2 Sam. vii. 14, where the promise is applied to Solomon.

Ver. 34. *once*, *i. e.* once for all; said of the unchangeableness of divine things, as opposed to the mutability of things human. 1 Peter iii. 18, Jude 3. *fail*, *i. e.* I will not lie unto David.

Ver. 36. *stand fast*, *i. e.* sure as the day follows the night. *witness*, *i. e.* God's covenant with sun and moon. Cp. Jer. xxxiii. 20—21, “Thus saith

the Lord; If ye can break My covenant of the day and My covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season, then may also My covenant be broken with David My servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne." Cp. also Jer. xxxi. 35—37.

Ver. 49. *Thy servants.* Cp. Introduction *ad fin.*, and note § 63 Ps. lxxii.

§ 125. PSALM LX.

THE beginning and end¹ of the 60th Psalm seem to ¹ *vv. 1—5* and *10—12*. belong to the time when the cry was ever 'Oh set us up again; Oh turn our captivity indeed;' and they point² to ² *vv. 6—9*. the prophetic or oracular utterance of the time of David contained in the centre, as a source of comfort in their present³ ³ See § 126, introduction. degradation and deep distress. The prophetic words promised a final victory over their perpetual foes, the neighbouring tribes; when was the hand of those tribes heavier upon them than now?

The Psalm has been given in its present composite form among the Psalms of David⁴.

⁴ § 11.

§ 126. PSALM LXXXV.

THIS Psalm, designed in antiphonal¹ form for the ¹ Cp. § 21 Ps. xx. Temple service, reveals to us a picture of the long-continued sufferings and depression of the people even after their restoration to their dearly loved city². Appealing to ² *v. 1*. God by this greatest of all His mercies³, they implore Him ³ *vv. 1, 2, 3*. to complete His work, to establish the restored Jerusalem and to rescue them from their humble and fallen state. In the second part he comforts them with the glorious vision

vouchsafed to him of the time when they would receive the
 4 v. 12. blessings of the re-establishment of God's glory in His land⁴.

The Psalm was apparently composed during the interval between the disappearance of Zerubbabel and the advent of Ezra, when they were harassed by a series of attacks from the Samaritans and other neighbouring nations, like those from which they had suffered in the time of Nehemiah.

The People

offereth thanksgiving for restoration to the land.

O Jehovah, Thou art become gracious unto Thy land,	1
Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob,	
Thou hast forgiven the offence of Thy people,	2
and hast covered all their sins ;	
Thou hast taken away all Thy displeasure,	3
and turned Thyself from Thy wrathful indignation :	
stablish us, O God of our Salvation,	4
and let Thine anger cease from us !	
wilt Thou be displeased at us for ever,	5
and wilt Thou stretch out Thy wrath from one generation	
to another ?	
wilt Thou not turn again and quicken us,	6
that Thy people may rejoice in Thee ?	
shew us Thy mercy, O Jehovah,	7
and grant us Thy salvation !	

The Priest,

with a warning of the condition of its fulfilment, revealeth to them his vision.

I will hearken what Jehovah our God will say ;	8
for He shall speak peace unto His people and to His saints,	
—but let them not turn again to folly !—	

‘surely His salvation is nigh them that fear Him, 9
 that glory may dwell in our land !
 mercy and truth are met together, 10
 righteousness and peace have kissed each other :
 truth shall spring up out of the earth, 11
 and righteousness shall look down from heaven :
 yea, Jehovah shall give His blessing 12
 and our land shall give her increase ;
 righteousness shall go before Him, 13
 and shall follow in the paths of His footsteps.’

Ver. 1. *brought back our captivity, i. e. the captives.*

Ver. 4. *stablish us, i. e. ‘turn our captivity,’ as § 93 Ps. cxxvi. 5, ‘turn us again,’ § 122 Ps. lxxx. 3, i. e. restore us fully.*

Ver. 8. Cp. the similar introduction to the utterance of prophetic words, Hab. ii. 1, 2, “I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me, ... and the Lord answered me and said, &c.”

Ver. 9. *Glory may dwell in our land*, fulfilling the hopes of the contemporary Haggai (ii. 7, 8, 9), “I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts. The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts.”

Ver. 13. The beautiful figures in which the descriptions of the future kingdom are clothed were no mere metaphor to men whose whole subsistence was at the mercy of an eastern climate, and who were at this time more than usually exposed to the attacks of their Bedouin neighbours.

For an illustration of the metaphor, which expresses the joy of the material world as the righteousness of its inhabitants, when their fidelity should no longer fail of its appropriate reward, cp. Hosea ii. 19, where under the figure of the presents of the bridegroom to his love, *i. e.* of God’s promised blessing to His faithful people, their fidelity is made a condition of the return of rainfall. “I will betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness * * * and I will answer to the Heavens, and they shall answer to the earth, and the earth shall answer to the corn and the wine and the oil, and they shall answer to Jezreel,” *i. e.* to the sowing of God. Hosea ii. 20, 21, 22. [Ewald.]

§ 127. PSALM LXXXIII.

THE description of the confederation of the heathen tribes in this Psalm carries us at once to the time

- ¹ Neh. iv. 7. "when Sanballat¹ and the army of the Samaritans, Tobiah the Ammonite with Geshem the Arabian and the Ashdodites were very wroth" at the news, that under the vigorous administration of Nehemiah, "the walls of Jerusalem were rising up again, and the breaches were beginning to be stopped²," and conspired all of them together ³ v. 4. to come and fight against Jerusalem and hinder it³!

The Jews however seemed to have had intelligence of the 'crafty counsels' of the confederacy; and though their adversaries had boasted 'that they should not hear nor see till they came in the midst of them and slew

- ⁴ Neh. iv. 11. them and caused their work to cease⁴,' yet God 'brought

- ⁵ Neh. iv. 15. their counsel to nought⁵—for Nehemiah appealed to the people in words as stirring as the Psalm—'to fear them not, but to remember the Lord which is great and terrible, and to fight for their brethren, their sons and their daughters, their wives and their houses⁶.'

⁶ Neh. iv. 14.
Cp. Numb.
xiv. 9; 2 Sam.
x. 12.

After the first danger was over, the people returned to their work and—as they laboured half of them at the work and half of them holding the spears, from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared⁷,' expecting every moment to hear the sound of the trumpet, with

⁷ Neh. iv. 21.
Cp. Exod.
xiv. 14, 25;
Deut. i. 30;
iii. 22; xx. 4;
Josh. xxiii.
10.

the old battle-cries of Moses, of Joshua and of David on their lips,—the words of the Psalmist may often have pealed forth from the workers on the wall.

The spirit-stirring words^a of the 2nd Psalm by which a ^{a § 16 Ps. ii. 22. 2, 3, 5.} young king's arm had been nerved to victory over a similar 'gathering together of the heathen,' were hovering before the Psalmist's mind. He feels that they are no longer now without a leader, as during the fifty years between the close of Zerubbabel's rule and the return of Ezra, in which their history had sunk into oblivion. They have in Nehemiah a chieftain not unworthy of Gideon or of Deborah. The deep devotion to his country, which had led him to leave a high position at the Court of Artaxerxes, was not without its fruits; for it was through his vigorous efforts in rebuilding the walls that the city was enabled to raise its head once more. Indeed when considered in the light of history, his achievements had a far more permanent effect than even the glorious victories of the older time.

The heads of the confederate tribes soon became aware of the greatness of the leader with whom they had to deal,—the only man who had at once the spirit to awaken the old fire of national enthusiasm, and the power both to heal dissensions within and to repel attacks from without—and all their efforts were directed to his destruction. Though they were disappointed in their treacherous attempts to murder him at a conference, yet

⁹ 74, 8, note.
Cp. intro-
duction to
§§ 119—126.

eventually, by misrepresenting his policy, they succeeded in at least temporarily undermining his power at the Persian court⁹. Although there was no sudden overthrow of the confederates as of the five kings at Beth-horon, yet they were more effectually foiled by the restoration of Jerusalem than they would have been by the greatest victory.

I.

Hold not Thy tongue, O God,	1
keep not still silence, refrain not Thyself, O God.	
for lo, Thine enemies rage together,	2
and they that hate Thee have lift up their head ;	
they have imagined craftily against Thy people,	3
and have taken counsel against Thy beloved ;	
they have said ; ‘ come and let us root them out that they be	
no more a people	4
and that the name of Israel may be no more in remem-	
brance.’	

II.

For they have cast their heads together with one consent,	5
and are confederate against Thee,	
the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites,	6
of Moab and the Hagarenes,	
Gebal and Ammon and Amalek,	7
the Philistines with them that dwell at Tyre ;	
Assyria also is joined with them,	8
and hath holpen the children of Lot.	

III.

But do Thou to them as unto the Midianites, 9
 unto Sisera and unto Jabin at the brook of Kison,
 who perished at Endor 10
 and became as dung for the earth;
 make them and their princes like Oreb and Zeeb, 11
 yea, make all their kings like as Zebah and Salmunna,
 who said; 'let us take to ourselves 12
 the habitations of God in possession.'

IV.

O my God, make them like unto the chaff 13
 and as the stubble before the wind,
 like as the fire that burneth up the wood, 14
 and as the flame that consumeth the mountains,
 persecute them even so with Thy tempest, 15
 and make them afraid with Thy storm,
 fill their faces with shame, 16
 that they may seek Thy Name, O Jehovah!
 let them be confounded and troubled for ever, 17
 let them be put to shame and perish,
 and they shall know that Thou, whose Name is JEHOVAH, 18
 art only the most Highest over all the earth.

Ver. 2. Cp. § 16 Ps. ii. 1.

Ver. 3. *beloved*, lit. 'hidden ones,' *i. e.* under the shadow of Thy wings, cp. § 62 Ps. xxxvii. 7, § 57 Ps. xxxi. 22.

Ver. 6. *Ishmaelites*, *i. e.* the Arabians, cp. Neh. iv. 7, vi. 1.

Hagarites (the children of Hagar), a tribe from the north-west of Arabia, near Gebal (or the Gibletes), near the old seat of the once terrible name of *Amalek*.

Ver. 8. *Assyria*, or Assur, the old name of the Empire of the North, means Persia. Ezra vi. 22. For the hostility of Sanballat the Persian satrap,

cp. Neh. iv. 1. The king had perhaps been led to suspect that Nehemiah might aim at setting himself up as an independent prince on the completion of the walls.

children of Lot, i. e. Moab and Ammon.

Ver. 9. *Midianites*, for the victory of Gideon, cp. Judg. vi, vii.

Vv. 9, 10. For *Sisera*, cp. Judg. iv, v. The name of *Endor* is not mentioned there; perhaps the Psalmist is quoting from a lost chronicle.

Ver. 11. *Oreb and Zeeb*, cp. Judg. vii. 25.

Zebah and Salmunna, cp. Judg. viii. 5—10, 18—21.

Ver. 13. *chaff*, cp. Is. xvii. 13, "They shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind."

§ 128. PSALM LXXVIII.

THIS is one of the great didactic Psalms of the Jewish nation. The prophets of the Captivity never tired of reminding their countrymen that the promises of God were not absolute, inalienable gifts nor the hereditary possession of a particular line, but blessings attaching only to those who willingly co-operate with God in His moral government of the world¹. It is with feelings such as these that the Psalmist appeals to history as the rich source of hope, warning and encouragement in the darkness which was continually threatening to envelope the nation. Bent on justifying the ways of God to man, he regards the whole history from this one point of view. He shews that God's ways are not unequal, but that the laws of His Providence are eternal and that He dispenses the blessings of Gerizim and the curses of Ebal² to His servants as they obey or disobey His commandments; that as at one time

¹ Cp. Is. xxvii. 11; Jer. xxvi. 1—6; Ezek. xviii, xix, xxii, xxiv, etc.

² Deut. xi. 29.

the passage of the Red Sea, so at another the 'graves of
 lust³,' are the marks of God's dealings with His people.<sup>3 271. 28—30,
 and note.</sup>
 Tracing the same principle, he shews how within the
 nation itself the first of the tribes had become last and
 the last first according to the changes of their character.
 The most remarkable example of this law, the most
 striking instance of great opportunities misused, was to be
 found in the varying fate of the tribe of Ephraim, at
 first the possessor of the national sanctuary of Shiloh,
 the ruling tribe of the confederacy during the whole era
 of Joshua and the Judges; then falling away to the heathen
 worship around them, losing sight of their mission, and
 letting the Ark—the testimony of God's covenant and the
 very symbol of their national existence—fall into the hands
 of the Philistine. History completes the lesson, and shews
 how when deservedly dethroned from their supremacy, they
 would fain have regained their position at the price of
 apostasy⁴; how under the rule of a succession of half-<sup>4 1 Kings
 xii. 28;
 2 Kings xvi.
 5.</sup> heathen kings they finally lost all sense of their high
 calling and became fused into the mass of nations which
 they had been intended to purify; finally, how they became
 so well satisfied with this degrading amalgamation, that
 when the more faithful part of the nation gladly seized
 the opportunity of return, they had lost even the desire
 to re-establish themselves in the home of their ancestors.

If we are to seek for the special occasion of a Psalm,
 the burden of which was continually in the mouths of the

⁵ Hos. iv. 15—17;
Amos ii, vii;
Is. xxviii. Prophets⁵, we may find it in the culminating point of the antagonism between the North and the South, when the Samaritans headed the heathen confederacy, which impeded the restoration in the times between Zerubbabel and Nehe-

⁶ Neh. iv. 2. miah⁶.

I.

The Psalmist calleth the people to listen to the lessons of their past history.

Hearken unto my teaching, O my people,	1
incline your ears to the words of my mouth ;	
I will open my mouth in a parable,	2
I will declare the dark things of old !	
the things which we have heard and known,	3
and such as our fathers have told us—	
we will not hide them from their children	4
but shew to the generation to come the honour of Jehovah,	
His might and His wonderful works that He hath done :	
for He established a statute in Jacob	5
and gave Israel a law	
which He commanded our forefathers	
to teach their children,	
that their posterity might know it,	6
and the children which were yet unborn,	
that when they came up they might shew their children the	
same ;	7
that they might put their trust in God,	8
and not to forget the works of God,	
but to keep His commandments,	

and not be as their forefathers 9
 a faithless and stubborn generation,
 a generation that set not their heart aright,
 and whose spirit cleaveth not steadfastly unto God.

II.

Like as the children of Ephraim who being harnessed and carrying bows, 10
 turned themselves back in the day of battle,
 they kept not the covenant of God, 11
 and would not walk in His law,
 but forgot what He had done, 12
 and the wonderful works that He had shewed for them :
 marvellous things did He in the sight of their forefathers, 13
 in the land of Egypt even in the field of Zoan ;
 He divided the sea and let them go through, 14
 He made the waters to stand on an heap ;
 in the daytime also He led them with a cloud 15
 and all the night through with a light of fire ;
 He clave the hard rocks in the wilderness 16
 and gave them drink thereof as it had been out of the
 great depths ;
 He brought water out of the stony rock, 17
 so that it gushed out like the rivers.

III.

Yet for all this they sinned yet more against Him, 18
 and provoked the most Highest in the wilderness,
 they tempted God in their hearts, 19
 and required meat for their lust,

they spake against God also, saying, 20
 'shall God prepare a table in the wilderness?
He smote the stony rock indeed that the water gushed out, 21
 and the streams flowed withal,
 but can He give bread also,
 or provide flesh for His people?'
when Jehovah heard this, He was wroth 22
 so that the fire was kindled against Jacob,
 and there came up heavy displeasure against Israel,
because they believed not in God, 23
 and put not their trust in His help :
so He commanded the clouds above, 24
 and opened the doors of heaven,
He rained down manna also upon them for to eat 25
 and gave them the bread of heaven.

IV.

So man did eat angels' food, 26
 He sent them food enough.
He caused the east wind to blow under heaven, 27
 and through His power He brought in the south wind,
He rained flesh upon them as thick as dust, 28
 and feathered fowl like as the sand of the sea,
He let it fall among their tents, 29
 even round about His habitations ;
so they eat and were well filled, 30
 for He gave them their desire !
they were not estranged from their lust,
 but while the meat was yet in their mouths, 31
the heavy wrath of God came upon them,

and slew the fattest of them,
yea and smote down the chosen men that were in Israel.

V.

But for all this they sinned yet more, 32
and believed not His wondrous works;
therefore their days did He consume in vanity, 33
and their years in trouble;
when He slew them, then they sought Him, 34
and turned them again and enquired after God,
and they remembered that God was their rock, 35
and the High God was their redeemer:
nevertheless they did but flatter Him with their mouth, 36
and dissembled with Him with their tongue,
for their heart was not whole with Him, 37
neither continued they steadfast in His covenant;
but He is so merciful that He forgave their misdeeds and de-
stroyed them not, 38
—yea, many a time turned He His wrath away, 39
and would not suffer His whole displeasure to arise;—
for He considered that they were but flesh, 40
and that they were even a wind that passeth away and
cometh not again.

VI.

Many a time did they provoke Him in the wilderness, 41
and grieved Him in the desert;
they turned back and tempted God, 42
and moved the Holy One of Israel;
they thought not of His hand, 43
and of the day when He delivered them from the hand of
the enemy:

how He had wrought His miracles in Egypt,	44
and His wonders in the field of Zoan;	
He turned their waters into blood,	45
so that they might not drink of the rivers ;	
He sent flies among them and devoured them up,	46
and frogs to destroy them;	
He gave their fruit unto the caterpillar,	47
and their labour unto the locust ;	
He destroyed their vines with hailstones,	48
and their mulberry-trees with the frost ;	
He smote their cattle also with hailstones,	49
and their flocks with hot thunderbolts.	

VII.

He cast upon them the furiousness of His wrath,	50
anger, displeasure and trouble,	
an host of destroying angels ;	
He made a way to His indignation,	51
and spared not their soul from death,	
but gave their life over to the pestilence,	
and smote all the firstborn in Egypt,	52
the first-fruits of the mightiest in the dwellings of Ham :	
but as for His people—He led them forth like sheep,	53
and guided them in the wilderness like a flock ;	
He brought them out safely, that they should not fear,	54
and overwhelmed their enemies with the sea,	
and brought them within the borders of His sanctuary,	55
even to His mountain which He purchased with His right hand.	

He cast out the nations also before them, 56
 and caused their land to be divided for an heritage,
 and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.

VIII.

Yet they tempted and displeased the most High God, 57
 and kept not His testimonies,
 but turned their backs and fell away like their forefathers, 58
 starting aside like a broken bow;
 for they grieved Him with their hill-altars, 59
 and provoked Him to displeasure with their images:
 when God heard this, He was wroth 60
 and took sore displeasure at Israel;
 so that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, 61
 even the tent that He had pitched among men,
 and delivered up His power into captivity, 62
 and His glory into the enemy's hand;
 He gave His people over also unto the sword, 63
 and was wroth with His inheritance;
 the fire consumed their young men, 64
 and their maidens were not given to marriage;
 their priests were slain with the sword, 65
 and their widows made no lamentation.

IX.

Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, 66
 and like a giant refreshed with wine;
 He drove His enemies backward, 67
 and put them to a perpetual shame;
 He refused the tabernacle of Joseph, 68
 and chose not the tribe of Ephraim;

but chose the tribe of Judah, 69
 even the hill of Sion which He loved;
 and there He built His sanctuary like the heavens on high, 70
 and laid the foundation of it like the earth that He hath
 made fast for ever.
 He chose David also His servant, 71
 and took him away from the sheepfolds;
 as he was following the ewes great with young, He took him, 72
 that he might feed Jacob His people
 and Israel His inheritance;
 so he fed them with a faithful and true heart 73
 and guided them prudently with all his power.

Ver. 1. *my teaching*. The Psalmist addresses his people as a prophet.

Ver. 2. *parable*. The Psalmist prepares the people for a Psalm of teaching.
dark things, *i. e.* the riddle of their past history—why God at one time supported and at another rejected them.

Ver. 10. *who being harnessed and carrying bows*, *i. e.* who though armed with bows and having the power, yet failed to cast out the heathen during their ascendancy. Ephraim is compared to the bow that fails at the moment of need, cp. Hosea vii. 16.

Ver. 13. *the field of Zoan*, *i. e.* the country round the ancient city of Tanis, the abode of the shepherd kings. Though Zoan is not mentioned in Exodus, it is supposed to have been the abode of the Israelites in their bondage.

Ver. 14. A quotation from the song of Miriam, Ex. xv. 8, "With the blast of Thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as a heap."

Ver. 15. For the smoke-like *cloud*, alternating with *fire*, as the beacon on their march, cp. Exod. xiii. 21, 22.

Vv. 16, 17. For the murmuring at Rephidim, and the *water from the rock* of Horeb, cp. Exod. xvii. 6. Part of ver. 17 is a quotation from Numb. xx. 8, which contains the account of the similar gift at Kadesh.

Ver. 19. *for their lust*, *i. e.* out of mere lust, cp. Numb. xi. 4, 5, "And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting, and the children of Israel

also wept again and said, 'who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt, etc.'"

Ver. 20. *prepare a table*, cp. § 25 Ps. xxiii. 5, "Thou shalt prepare a table before me against them that trouble me, Thou hast anointed my head with oil (as for a feast) and my cup shall be full."

Ver. 24. The Psalmist passes to the description of the gift and does not return to the punishment till ver. 31.

Ver. 26. *man*. There is no emphasis on the word, which merely means 'every' man. Cp. Exod. xvi. 16, "Gather it every man according to his calling, an omer for every man."

angels' food, *i. e.* like the bread of the strong or mighty ones, *i. e.* 'the bread of Heaven.' (§ 144 Ps. cv. 39.) Cp. Wisd. xvi. 20.

Ver. 27. *under heaven*, *i. e.* from heaven, or *through His power*, as the next line has it.

Ver. 28. For the quails that were given in wrath at the fatal Kibroth-hattaavah, or 'the graves of lust,' cp. Numb. xi. 31—35.

Ver. 29. *His habitations*, *i. e.* the land of the chosen people.

Ver. 30. *not estranged*, cp. Numb. xi. 33, "While the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed."

Ver. 31. *fattest*, *i. e.* the hale and strong ones, the hope of the nation, cp. § 69 Ps. xxii. 29. *chosen men*, lit. 'the young men.'

Ver. 33. *in vanity*, *i. e.* He let their days fade away as a breath.

Vv. 45—49 are a parenthesis explaining vv. 43, 44. For the plagues cp. Exod. ix, x.

Ver. 46. *devoured them up*. Cp. Philo's description of the dog-flies of Egypt, "They rest not till they have satisfied themselves with blood and flesh."

Ver. 48. For the *vines* of Egypt cp. the butler's dream, Gen. xl. 9.

Ver. 49. Cp. Exod. ix. 23, "The Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground."

Ver. 55. *His mountain*, *i. e.* the hill of Shiloh, cp. ver. 61 and Exod. xv. 17, "Thou shalt bring them in and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, in the sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established." The mention of Sion here would be out of place, as the Psalmist is still dealing with the trial of the tribe of Ephraim.

Ver. 57. *testimonies*, *i. e.* did not obey the warnings by which He testified to them His displeasure.

Vv. 57, 58, 59. Judg. ii. 12, 13.

Ver. 58. Cp. ver. 10 and Hos. vii. 16.

Ver. 61. Cp. Josh. xviii. 1.

Ver. 62. *His glory, i. e.* the ark. Cp. 1 Sam. iv. 21, 22, "And she named the child Ichabod, saying, 'the glory is departed from Israel:' because the ark of God was taken," § 123 Ps. cxxxii. 8, "Thou and the Ark of Thy strength." The Ark is called 'power,' as the pledge of the manifestation of Divine power (1 Sam. iv. 3), or 'beauty' or 'ornament,' as the place of the manifestation of His glory.

Ver. 63. *sword.* Cp. 1 Sam. iv. 10, for the great slaughter by the Philistines in which 30,000 Israelites perished.

Ver. 64. *fire, i. e.* of war. For this metaphor cp. Numb. xxi. 26—28.

Ver. 65. The state was so utterly ruined, that there could be no public *lamentation*, cp. Job xxvii. 15, "This is the portion of the wicked man with God...his widows shall not weep." Ezek. xxiv. 21, 23, "And your sons and your daughters whom ye have left shall fall by the sword...and your tires shall be upon your heads, and your shoes upon your feet; ye shall not mourn nor weep." Cp. the account of the fall of Jehoiakim, Jer. xxii. 18.

§ 129. PSALM LXXXI.

THE enthusiasm with which the services of the New Temple were performed made the Temple hymns the natural vehicle for conveying truths to the minds of the nation. This Psalm seems specially intended for the great festivals of the seventh month, which was ushered in by the feast of Trumpets or the new moon, and which contained not only the great day of Atonement but also the feast of Tabernacles, celebrated at the full moon of the same month, and honoured by the slaughter of victims above any feast in the Jewish year. This feast not only commemorated the dwelling in tents in the wilderness¹,

¹ Lev. xxiii.
43.

but was also the great harvest thanksgiving of the nation². ² Ex. xxiii.
 As was natural at a time when the memory of the second^{16.}
 Exodus was fresh in their minds, the Psalmist dwells chiefly
 on the historical aspect of the feast and the great lessons
 of their deliverance, with but a cursory allusion³ to the³ v. 17.
 harvest.

I.

Sing we merrily unto God our strength,	1
make a cheerful noise unto the God of Jacob;	
raise the psalm, bring hither the tabret,	2
the merry harp with the lute;	
blow up the trumpet in the new moon,	3
and in the full moon upon our solemn feast-day:	
for this was made a statute for Israel,	4
and a law of the God of Jacob;	
this He ordained in Joseph for a law	5
when He came against the land of Egypt,	
what time I heard a strange language.	

II.

'I eased his shoulders from the burden	6
and his hands were delivered from carrying the bricks.'	
'Thou calledst upon Me in trouble and I delivered thee	7
and heard thee in the darkness of the thunder;	8
and proved thee also at the waters of strife:	
'hear, O My people, and I will testify unto thee,	9
O Israel, if thou wouldest hearken unto Me!	
there shall no strange god be in thee,	10
neither shalt thou worship any other god;	

I am Jehovah thy God, 11
 Who brought thee out of the land of Egypt,
 open thy mouth wide, and I shall fill it!

III.

But My people would not hear My voice, 12
 and Israel would not obey Me;
 so I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts, 13
 and let them follow their own imaginations!
 'Oh that My people had hearkened unto Me, 14
 and Israel had walked in My ways!
 I should soon have put down their enemies, 15
 and turned My hand against their adversaries;
 the haters of Jehovah should have submitted themselves to
 them, 16
 but *their* time should have endured for ever!

IV.

He should have fed them also with the finest wheat flour 17
 and with honey out of the stony rock should I have satisfied
 thee.

- Ver. 5. *Joseph*, i.e. the 12 tribes, Ephraim then being chief. *against*, cp.
 Ex. xi. 4. *I*, i.e. Israel. *a strange language*. Cp. § 138 Ps. cxiv. 1.
 Vv. 5, 6. For the change from *He* to *I*, cp. § 117 Ps. xci. 14, note.
 Ver. 6. *burden*, lit. basket.
 Ver. 11. See introduction to this Psalm.
 Vv. 13—17. An epitome of Deut. xxxii.

PERIOD V.

CLOSE OF THE PSALTER.

PERIOD V.

CLOSE OF THE PSALTER.

AFTER the time of Nehemiah all guidance from the history ceases. We have arrived at a period, towards the end of the 5th and the beginning of the 4th century before the Christian era, when the Prophets, the great expounders and upholders of the spiritual life of the nation, had passed away; no figure is visible but that of the Hierarchy, which, though busied with a ceaseless round of occupation in gathering up and preserving national records and antiquities, only marked the paralysis and extinction of national life. Of books there was no lack, but they were no longer the spirit-stirring records of a time of thought and movement; they were rather, as they have been called in Ecclesiastes¹, itself probably the product of this age of formalism, 'a weariness to the flesh;' we meet with no further attempts to solve the problems, which the ever-changing circumstances of the time suggested; there is no stirring of the breeze in the close and stifling atmosphere which, even in the absence of an irreligious life, was then, as it has been ever since, the characteristic of hierarchical rule.

In this general stagnation National Psalmody expired. Hence it is that in this latter period we find a greater prevalence of

¹ Eccles. xii. 12.

the Composite Psalms², as of those constructed on the Acrostic or Alphabetical arrangement³.

Only within the sanctuary of personal experience does Psalmody retain its ancient grandeur; here it is equal to the old models both in depth of thought and in beauty of expression. The same intensity of religious life, which characterized some Psalms⁴ of the preceding period, is still found in this⁵; and never did religion burn with a brighter light than now, when stripped of all other protection and consolation than that which itself affords. In these Psalms, which may be called the 'Psalms of personal experience,' the struggle with the world has ceased, and the pious spirit exults in the serene enjoyment of blessings, which the most fiery trials had been powerless to take away. Thus they will ever be quoted with those of the same character from an earlier period—the 23rd and 27th—as the highest expression of spiritual security.

Closely connected with these, indeed immediately springing from them, are the grand Congregational Psalms, with which the Psalter closes⁶. In these there is a fervour and a glow, such as is only found when it burns with equal strength in the heart of each member of the congregation. From this fervency of spirit, as well as from the rich abundance of this group, we see how the little remnant of the new Jerusalem, purified seven times in the fire of affliction, had gained in the possession of these eternal truths an abiding spiritual life, such as no shocks of outward circumstance could take away.

² Cp. note, § 24.

³ Cp. § 130 Ps. cxix. and introduction.

⁴ Pss. xci, cxxxix, cxvi.

⁵ Pss. ciii, civ.

⁶ Pss. cxlv—cl. from this; as xxxiii, lxvi. 1—12, lxvii, lxxxi, from an earlier time.

PERIOD V.

CLOSE OF THE PSALTER.

[SECTIONS 130—153.]

§ 130. PSALM CXIX.

IN the Psalter many Psalms¹ present themselves composed on the acrostic or alphabetical arrangement, of which the most elaborate and extended specimens are found in the Lamentations and the 119th Psalm. As the name 'Alphabetical' implies, each letter of the alphabet in order forms the initial letter of consecutive verses. In some² each letter is once employed: in Lamentations, ch. iii. each letter forms the beginning of three, and in Psalm cxix. of eight consecutive verses. Such an arrangement is by its nature constrained and artificial: adapted for didactic rather than for lyric expression, it belongs to an age no longer animated by the soul of poetry, but struggling to clothe its religious thoughts in a poetic form. No one who has formed any adequate conception of the

¹ § 61 Ps. ix, x; § 62 Ps. xxxvii; §§ 77, 78 Ps. xxv, xxxiv; § 130 Ps. cxix; §§ 135, 136 Ps. cxi, cxii; § 147 Ps. cxlv.

² §§ 77, 78, 62.

genius of David, could fancy his selecting an arrangement which hinders the flow of thought and language, and often necessitates repetition of ideas. Indeed in the earliest specimen of the Alphabetical Psalm³, assuming that Psalms ix, x. form one poem, we see how uneasily the spirit of the Hebrew poet bore its shackles and how, when the Psalmist's thought finds full expression, the structure is left incomplete. In short, the system belongs not to the period of national prosperity and vigorous life, but to the time of its decadence and extinction. Religion is no longer connected with national triumphs, no longer enters into the administration of a prosperous kingdom. There has opened a wide gulf between the godly and the world. Religious meditation had become the stay of the afflicted, their only refuge from unrighteous rulers. The Alphabetical arrangement was doubtless found an aid to memory, and the Psalmist or Prophet naturally employed it as a vehicle for Lamentations or consolations addressed to others; or for purposes of private devotion, to reiterate his confidence in the watchful protection of Jehovah⁴, to dwell on His attributes⁵, and meditate lovingly on every aspect and title of His written Law⁶.

³ § 61 Ps. ix, x.

⁴ § 77 Ps. xxv.

⁵ § 147 Ps. cxlv.

⁶ § 130 Ps. cxix.

The 119th Psalm calls to mind the feelings and poetry of the monastic ages*. It is the work of one who has witnessed a good confession⁷, able to look back upon a

⁷ 272, 150, 157, 161.

* Cp. Trench's *Sacred Latin Poetry*, p. 227, Alard. *De Nomine Jesu*.

life of adherence to Jehovah in the midst of persecution, derision and scorn⁸, chastened by the afflictions of life⁹, devoted to meditation¹⁰, blessed with a sense of God's love and an earnest desire to do His will¹¹, ever longing for a fuller knowledge of His Law¹².

⁸ *2v.* 61, 87,
51, 85, 143.
⁹ *v.* 67.
¹⁰ *2v.* 62, 127,
148.
¹¹ *7v.* 106,
112, 163.
¹² *7v.* 33, 66,
125.

If we would fathom the depth of meaning in the written Law of Israel, if we would measure the elevation of soul, the hope, the confidence even before princes and kings, which pious Jews derived from it, we must turn to this Psalm. Here is an epitome of all true religion as conceived by the best spirits of that time. To such a loving study and meditation on the Law the Alphabetical arrangement is not inappropriate, and if the poem be necessarily somewhat cramped, it is nevertheless pervaded by the glow of love and abounds in spiritual life. Thus it will ever remain a treasured specimen if not of the lyric genius and inspiration of the Hebrews, at least of the high feelings and aspirations of the second childhood of the nation—a period to which it is assigned not only by the general thought but by express reference to the author's captivity¹³.

¹³ *v.* 54.

Here as in the other Psalms of the same structure, an attempt has been made to present in English the original form, because the Alphabetical arrangement is the very life of the poem; and where there is apparent forcing, it must be remembered that this is a version of poems in their very nature constrained.

AN ALPHABETICAL PSALM.

- A** blessing is on them that are undefiled in the way, 1
and walk in the law of Jehovah;
- A** blessing is on them that keep His testimonies, 2
and seek Him with their whole heart:
- Also** on them that do no wickedness, 3
but walk in His ways.
- A** law hast Thou given unto us, 4
that we should diligently keep Thy commandments.
- Ah!** Lord, that my ways were made so direct 5
that I might keep Thy statutes!
- And** then shall I not be confounded, 6
while I have respect unto all Thy commandments.
- As** for me, I will thank Thee with an unfeigned heart, 7
when I shall have learned Thy righteous judgments.
- An** eye will I have unto Thy ceremonies, 8
O forsake me not utterly.
- By** what shall a young man cleanse his way? 9
even by ruling himself after Thy word!
- B**etimes have I sought Thee with my whole heart, 10
O let me not go wrong out of Thy commandments;
- Behold**, Thy words have I hid within my heart, 11
that I might not sin against Thee!
- Blessed** art Thou, O Jehovah; 12
O teach me Thy statutes.
- By** my lips have I proclaimed 13
all the judgments of Thy mouth.
- Better** is it to walk in the way of Thy statutes, 14
than to possess all manner of riches.

- B**efore mine eyes are Thy commandments, 15
and I have respect unto Thy ways!
- B**lessed for ever are Thy statutes, 16
I will not forsake Thy word.
- C**omfort Thy servant, that I may live 17
and keep Thy word!
- C**ome Thou and open mine eyes, 18
that I may see the wondrous things of Thy law.
- C**onsider how that I am a stranger upon earth; 19
O hide not Thy commandments from me!
- C**onsumed is my soul by the very fervent desire, 20
that it hath always unto Thy judgments.
- C**onfounded are the proud, 21
and cursed are they that do err from Thy commandments.
- C**ontempt and reproach do Thou turn from me, 22
for I have kept Thy testimonies!
- C**ounsel have princes taken against me, 23
but Thy servant is occupied in Thy statutes;
- C**ontinually is my delight in Thy testimonies, 24
for they are my counsellors.
- D**eep in the dust lieth my soul, 25
O quicken Thou me according to Thy word!
- D**uly have I acknowledged my ways and Thou heardest me, 26
O teach me Thy statutes!
- D**eclare unto me the way of Thy commandments, 27
and so shall I talk of Thy wondrous works.
- D**isquieted is my soul for very heaviness. 28
O comfort Thou me according unto Thy word.

- Do** Thou take from me the way of lying, 29
and cause me to make much of Thy law ;
- Dear** unto me is the way of truth, 30
and Thy judgments have I laid before me.
- Do** I not cleave unto Thy testimonies? 31
O Jehovah, confound me not.
- Daily** will I run in the way of Thy commandments, 32
when Thou settest my heart at liberty.
- Enlighten** me, O Jehovah, in the way of Thy statutes ; 33
and I shall keep it unto the end.
- Enrich** me with understanding and I shall keep Thy law, 34
yea, I shall keep it with my whole heart.
- Exercise** me in the path of Thy commandments, 35
for therein is my desire.
- Encline** mine heart unto Thy testimonies, 36
and not to covetousness.
- Ever** turn away mine eyes, lest they behold vanity, 37
and quicken Thou me in Thy way.
- Establish** Thy word in thy servant,— 38
even that we should fear Thee.
- Ease** me from the rebuke that I am afraid of, 39
for Thy judgments are good.
- Even** in Thy precepts is my delight, 40
O quicken me in Thy righteousness.
- Follow** me, O Jehovah, with Thy loving mercy, 41
even with Thy salvation according to Thy word.
- For** so shall I make answer unto my blasphemers, 42
for my trust is in Thy word.

- F**orbear to take Thy truth utterly out of my mouth, 43
 for my hope is in Thy judgments.
- F**or so shall I alway keep Thy law, 44
 yea, for ever and ever.
- F**ree me and I shall walk at liberty, 45
 because I seek Thy commandments.
- F**aithfully will I speak of Thy testimonies, 46
 even before kings I will not be ashamed.
- F**ull of delight are Thy commandments, 47
 which I have loved.
- F**or ever will I lift up my hands unto Thy commandments, 48
 and my study shall be in Thy statutes.
- G**raciously think upon Thy servant as concerning Thy word, 49
 wherein Thou hast caused me to put my trust.
- G**reat is the comfort thereof in my trouble, 50
 for Thy word hath quickened me.
- G**rievously have the proud had me in derision, 51
 yet have I not shrinked from Thy law.
- G**lad was I when I remembered Thine everlasting judgments, 52
 O Jehovah, and received comfort.
- G**reat horror hath taken hold upon me, 53
 because of the wicked that forsake Thy law.
- G**lorious things have I sung of Thy statutes, 54
 in the house of my pilgrimage.
- G**ladly have I thought upon Thy Name in the night season, 55
 O Jehovah, and have kept Thy law.
- G**racious hast Thou been unto me, 56
 because I kept Thy commandments.

- H**ave not I promised to keep Thy law? 57
for Thou art my portion, O Jehovah!
- H**umbly have I made my petitions with my whole heart, 58
O be merciful unto me according to Thy word.
- H**ave not I called mine own ways to remembrance, 59
and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies.
- H**aste made I and prolonged not the time, 60
to keep Thy commandments.
- H**otly have the ungodly beset me on every side, 61
but I have not forgotten Thy law.
- H**ear me at midnight when I rise to thank Thee, 62
because of Thy righteous judgments.
- H**oly men are my companions, 63
and such as keep Thy commandments.
- H**ast not Thou, O Jehovah, filled the earth with Thy mercy? 64
O teach me Thy statutes.
- I**n mercy hast Thou, O Jehovah, dealt with Thy servant, 65
according unto Thy word.
- I**nstruct me in true understanding and knowledge, 66
for I have believed Thy commandments.
- I** went wrong before I was troubled, 67
but now have I kept Thy word.
- I**n Thee, O Lord, is goodness and mercy; 68
O teach me Thy statutes.
- I**niquitous men have imagined a lie against me, 69
but I will keep Thy commandments with my whole heart.
- I**n truth their heart is as fat as brawn, 70
but my delight hath been in Thy law.
- I**t is good for me that I have been in trouble, 71
that I might learn Thy statutes.

Is not the law of Thy mouth dearer unto me 72
than thousands of gold and silver?

Jehovah, Thy hands have made me and fashioned me, 73
O give me understanding—to learn Thy commandments.

Joyful shall they that fear Thee be when they see me, 74
because I have put my trust in Thy word.

Just are Thy judgments, O Jehovah; 75
Thou of very faithfulness hast caused me to be troubled.

Jehovah, let Thy merciful kindness be my comfort, 76
according to Thy word unto Thy servant.

Jehovah, let Thy loving mercies come unto me, 77
for Thy law is my delight.

Judge Thou the proud, for they go about to destroy me, 78
but I am occupied in Thy commandments.

Join unto me those that fear Thy Name, 79
and such as have known Thy testimonies.

Joyfully shall my heart continue in Thy statutes, 80
that I be not ashamed.

Longed have I for Thy salvation, 81
and my hope is in Thy word.

Longed have mine eyes for Thy word; 82
saying, 'O when wilt Thou comfort me?'

Like a bottle in the smoke am I dried up, 83
yet do I not forget Thy statutes.

Lord! how few are the days of Thy servant! 84
when wilt Thou be avenged of them that persecute me?

- Lawless men**, which walk not in Thy ways, 85
have digged pits for my life.
- Lord**, all Thy commandments are true ; 86
they persecute me falsely : O be Thou my help.
- Lo!** they had almost made an end of me upon earth, 87
but I forsook not Thy commandments.
- Let** Thy loving-kindness quicken my soul, 88
so shall I keep the testimonies of Thy mouth.
- Marvellous** is Thy word, O Jehovah ; 89
it endureth for ever in heaven.
- Mindful** art Thou of Thy truth to all generations, 90
Thou hast laid the foundation of the earth and it abideth.
- Morning** and evening await Thine ordinance, 91
for all these things do serve Thee.
- My** delight hath been in Thy law, 92
else had I perished in my trouble.
- Mindful** am I of Thy commandments, 93
for with them hast Thou quickened me.
- Mercifully** save me, for I am Thine, 94
and I have sought Thy commandments.
- Malicious** men laid wait for me to destroy me, 95
but I will consider Thy testimonies.
- Mine** eye seeth an end of all perfection, 96
but Thy commandment is exceeding broad.
- Nought** love I like unto Thy law, 97
all the day long is my study in it.
- Now** am I wiser than mine enemies, 98
for Thy commandments are ever with me.

- N**ay, I have more understanding than my teachers, 99
 for Thy testimonies are my study.
- N**ot even the aged are wiser than I, 100
 because I keep Thy commandments.
- N**ever will I turn my foot to any evil way, 101
 that I may keep Thy word.
- N**either have I shrunk from Thy judgments, 102
 for Thou teachest me.
- N**othing is sweeter than Thy words unto my throat ; 103
 yea, sweeter are they than honey to my mouth.
- N**eeds must I hate every evil way, 104
 for through Thy precepts do I get understanding.
- O** God! Thy word is a lantern unto my feet, 105
 and a light unto my paths.
- O**f old have I sworn, I am steadfastly purposed, 106
 to keep Thy righteous judgments.
- O**ut of measure am I troubled ; 107
 quicken me, O Jehovah, according to Thy word.
- O** Lord, let the freewill offerings of my mouth please Thee, 108
 and teach me Thy judgments.
- O**ftimes have I put my life in my hand, 109
 yet do I not forget Thy law.
- O**n every side have they laid a snare for me, 110
 but yet I swerved not from Thy commandments.
- O** Lord, Thy testimonies are mine heritage for ever, 111
 and why? they are the very joy of my heart.
- O**ccupied is my heart in Thy statutes, 112
 that I may fulfil them even unto the end.

- P**ropane persons do I hate, 113
but Thy law do I love.
- P**rotection art Thou unto me and shield, 114
and my trust is in Thy word.
- P**art from me, ye evildoers, 115
for I will keep the commandments of my God.
- P**reserve me according to Thy word, that I may live; 116
and let me not be disappointed of my hope.
- P**revent me with Thy help, and I shall be safe; 117
yea, my delight shall be ever in Thy statutes.
- P**erished are all they that depart from Thy statutes, 118
for they imagine but deceit.
- P**ut away like dross all the ungodly of the earth, 119
then shall I love Thy testimonies.
- P**erplexed am I, I tremble for fear of Thee, 120
yea, I am afraid of Thy judgments.
- R**ighteous and lawful are my dealings; 121
O give me not over unto mine oppressors.
- R**ise up and be surety for Thy servant for good; 122
that the proud do me no wrong.
- R**emember how mine eyes fail with looking for Thy help 123
and for the word of Thy righteousness.
- R**eward Thy servant according to Thy loving mercy, 124
and teach me Thy statutes.
- R**ecompense Thy servant with understanding, 125
that I may know Thy testimonies.
- R**ise up, Jehovah!—yea, the time is come— 126
for they have destroyed Thy law.

- R**ight dearly do I love Thy precepts, 127
 yea, above gold and precious stones.
- R**espect have I unto all Thy commandments, 128
 and all false ways I utterly abhor.
- S**ure and wonderful are Thy testimonies; 129
 therefore doth my soul keep them.
- S**o soon as Thy word goeth forth, 130
 it giveth light and understanding unto the simple;
- S**o I opened my mouth and panted, 131
 for I longed for Thy commandments.
- S**end help, O God; be merciful unto me, 132
 as Thou usest to do unto them that love Thy name.
- S**et my steps aright in Thy word; 133
 so shall no wickedness have dominion over me.
- S**ave me from the wrongful dealings of men; 134
 and so shall I keep Thy commandments.
- S**hew the light of Thy countenance upon Thy servant; 135
 and teach me Thy statutes.
- S**treams of waters run down mine eyes, 136
 because they keep not Thy law.
- T**hou art righteous, O Jehovah, 137
 and true is Thy judgment.
- T**he testimonies which Thou hast commanded, 138
 are exceeding righteous and true.
- T**he zeal of mine heart hath even consumed me, 139
 because mine enemies have forgotten Thy words.
- T**hy word is tried to the uttermost, 140
 and Thy servant loveth it.

- Though** I am small and of no reputation, 141
yet do I not forget Thy commandments.
- Thy** righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, 142
and Thy law is the truth.
- Trouble** and heaviness have taken hold upon me, 143
yet is my delight in Thy commandments.
- The** righteousness of Thy testimonies is everlasting; 144
O grant me understanding, and I shall live.
- Unto** Thee will I call with my whole heart, 145
hear me, O Jehovah, I will keep Thy statutes.
- Unto** Thee, O Jehovah, do I call: 146
help me and I shall keep Thy testimonies.
- Uprising** early do I cry unto Thee, 147
for in Thy word is my trust.
- Uprisen** am I before the night-watches, 148
that I might be occupied in Thy words.
- Up,** Lord, and hear me according to Thy loving mercy; 149
O Jehovah, quicken me as Thou art wont.
- Unholy** men draw nigh to persecute me, 150
they are far from Thy law.
- Upon** Thee do I call, for Thou art near, 151
and all Thy commandments are true.
- Unchanged** are Thy testimonies of old, 152
and Thou hast founded them for ever.
- Vouchsafe** to consider mine adversity and deliver me, 153
for I do not forget Thy law.
- Vouchsafe** to plead my cause and deliver me, 154
quicken me according to Thy word.

Verily, health is far from the ungodly, 155
for they regard not Thy statutes.

Very great, O Jehovah, is Thy mercy; 156
quicken me as Thou art wont.

Violent men and they that persecute me are many, 157
yet do I not swerve from Thy testimonies.

Vexed am I when I see the transgressors, 158
because they keep not Thy law.

Visit me, O Jehovah, for I love Thy commandments; 159
quicken me according to Thy loving-kindness.

Verity and righteousness are Thine from the beginning, 160
and all Thy judgments endure for evermore.

Without a cause have princes persecuted me, 161
but my heart standeth in awe of Thy word.

Wholly do I rejoice in Thy word, 162
as one that findeth great spoil.

Whereas, for lies—I hate and abhor them, 163
but Thy law do I love.

With my voice do I praise Thee seven times a day, 164
because of Thy righteous judgments.

Wondrous peace have they that love Thy law! 165
and They are not offended at it.

When have I not looked, O Jehovah, for Thy salvation, 166
and have not done after Thy commandments?

When hath not my soul kept Thy testimonies, 167
and loved them exceedingly?

Well have I kept Thy commandments and Thy testimonies, 168
for all my ways are before Thee.

- Y**et let my complaint come before Thee, O Jehovah! 169
 give me understanding according to Thy word.
- Y**ea, let my supplication come before Thee; 170
 deliver me according to Thy word.
- Y**et shall my lips be telling of Thy praise, 171
 when Thou hast taught me Thy statutes.
- Y**ea, my tongue shall sing of Thy word, 172
 for all Thy commandments are righteous.
- Y**ield me help with Thy right hand, 173
 for I have chosen Thy commandments.
- Y**earned have I for Thy help, O Jehovah, 174
 and in Thy law is my delight.
- Y**et shall my soul live and praise Thee, 175
 and Thy judgments shall help me.
- Y**ea, seek me, though I stray like a sheep that is lost,— 176
 seek Thy servant, for I do not forget Thy commandments.

§§ 131, 132. PSALMS CIII, CIV.

THESE are at once Psalms of thanksgiving and confessions of faith. Both invite the congregation to the praise of Jehovah,—the 103rd, as the Redeemer and Pardoners; the 104th, as the Creator and Giver of life.

§ 131. PSALM CIII.

I.

*Praise due to God for His loving-kindness to each of His children,
 Praise Jehovah, O my soul,
 and all that is within me praise His holy Name.*

Praise Jehovah, O my soul,	2
and forget not all His benefits ;	
Who forgiveth all thy sin	3
and healeth all thine infirmities ;	
Who saveth thy life from destruction,	4
and crowneth thee with mercy and loving-kindness ;	
Who satisfieth thy desire with good things,	5
making thee young and lusty as an eagle.	

II.

for His revelation of Himself to mankind.

Jehovah executeth righteousness	6
and judgment for all them that are oppressed with wrong.	
He shewed His ways unto Moses,	7
His works unto the children of Israel ;	
Jehovah is full of compassion and mercy,	8
long suffering and of great goodness,	
He will not alway be chiding,	9
neither keepeth He His anger for ever.	

III.

His mercy in forgiving sins,

He hath not dealt with us after our sins,	10
nor rewarded us according to our wickednesses ;	
for look how high the heaven is in comparison of the earth,	11
so great is His mercy also towards them that fear Him :	
look how wide also the east is from the west,	12
so far hath He set our sins from us :	
yea, like as a father pitieth his own children,	13
even so is Jehovah merciful unto them that fear Him.	

IV.

His compassionate dealings with His creatures,

For He knoweth whereof we are made,	14
He remembereth that we are but dust.	
The days of man are but as grass,	15
he flourisheth as a flower of the field:	
for as soon as the wind goeth over it, it is gone,	16
and the place thereof shall know it no more:	
but the merciful goodness of Jehovah endureth for ever and	
ever upon them that fear Him,	17
and His righteousness unto children's children,	
even upon such as keep His covenant,	18
and think upon His commandments to do them.	

V.

and His sovereignty over the world.

Jehovah hath prepared His seat in heaven,	19
and His kingdom ruleth over all.	
O praise Jehovah, ye angels of His,	20
ye that excel in strength and do His commandment,	
and hearken unto the voice of His words.	
O praise Jehovah, all ye His hosts,	21
ye servants of His, that do His pleasure:	
O speak good of Jehovah, all ye works of His,	22
in all places of His dominion!	
<i>Praise thou Jehovah, O my soul.</i>	

Ver. 5. Cp. Is. xl. 31, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength;

they shall mount up with wings, as eagles."

Ver. 8. Cp. Exod. xxxiv. 6.

§ 132. PSALM CIV.

A HYMN of praise to Jehovah as the Almighty Creator of the world.

The Psalmist does not regard God as calling the world into existence and establishing order out of chaos, to retire into an epicurean rest and reveal Himself only by special manifestations to His creatures. His is the sustaining hand which supports all things; it is in Him that they live and move and have their being. The more awful operations of His hands, the heavens parting from the earth, the hills uprising and the valleys subsiding by His word, do not more truly proclaim His power and beneficence, than the grass upon the mountains or the smallest creatures that enjoy His bounty and owe their existence to His will. This it is which fills the Psalmist with love and praise¹; ¹ *vv.* 30—33. this is his assurance that sin and ungodliness are only for a season and must vanish from the world which God has made². Instinct as every living and created thing is to the ² *vv.* 34, 35. Psalmist's mind with the message of God's love, he carries the thought into the minutest detail, and yet the picture of creation which he sets before us is hardly less grand and simple than that in Genesis³ by which he is obviously ³ *See note.* inspired.

I.

Praise to God, for He created the heavens,

Praise Jehovah, O my soul!

I

O Jehovah, my God, Thou art exceeding glorious,

Thou art clothed with majesty and honour!

Thou deckest Thyself with light as it were with a garment, 2
and spreadest out the heavens like a curtain ;
Who layeth the beams of His chambers in the waters, 3
and maketh the clouds His chariot,
and walketh upon the wings of the wind ;
Who maketh the winds His messengers 4
and the flaming fire His minister.

II.

and the earth,

He laid the foundations of the earth, 5
that it never should move at any time :
Thou coverest it with the deep like as with a garment, 6
the waters stand on the hills :
at Thy rebuke they flee, 7
at the voice of Thy thunder they are afraid
—the hills uprise, the valleys sink— 8
even unto the place which Thou hast appointed for them :
Thou hast set them their bounds which they shall not pass, 9
neither turn again to cover the earth.

III.

the dry land and all that is therein,

He sendeth the springs into the rivers, 10
which run among the hills ;
all beasts of the field drink thereof, 11
and the wild asses quench their thirst ;
beside them do the fowls of the air have their habitation, 12
and sing among the branches ;
He watereth the hills from above ; 13
the earth is filled with the fruit of Thy works !

IV.

He bringeth forth grass for the cattle, 14
and green herb for the service of men,
that He may bring food out of the earth; 15
wine, that maketh glad the heart of man,
and maketh his face to shine as it were with oil,
and bread to strengthen man's heart: .
the trees of Jehovah also are full of sap, 16
even the cedars of Libanus which He hath planted;
wherein the birds make their nests, 17
and the fir-trees are a dwelling for the stork ;
the high hills are a refuge for the wild goats, 18
and so are the stony rocks for the conies.

V.

the heavenly bodies,

He appointed the moon for certain seasons, 19
and the sun knoweth his going down:
Thou makest darkness that it may be night, 20
wherein all the beasts of the forest do move ;
the lions roaring after their prey, 21
do seek their meat from God;
the sun ariseth and they get them away together, 22
and lay them down in their dens:
man goeth forth unto his work, 23
and to his labour until the evening.

VI.

the sea and all that therein is.

O Jehovah, how manifold are Thy works, 24
in wisdom hast Thou made them all:
the earth is full of Thy riches ;

so is that great and wide sea also, 25
 wherein are things creeping innumerable,
 both small and great beasts ;
there go the ships 26
 and that leviathan whom Thou hast made to take his pas-
 time with Thee.

VII.

He is the source of life,

These wait all upon Thee, 27
 that Thou mayest give them meat in due season ;
when Thou givest it them, they gather it ; 28
 when Thou openest Thine hand, they are filled with good ;
when Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled ; 29
 when Thou takest away their breath, they die,
 and are turned again to their dust ;
when Thou lettest Thy breath go forth they shall be made, 30
 and Thou renewest the face of the earth.

VIII.

the Sovereign and righteous Judge of the world.

The glorious majesty of Jehovah shall endure for ever, 31
 Jehovah shall rejoice in His works !
the earth shall tremble at the look of Him, 32
 if He do but touch the hills, they shall smoke.
I will sing unto Jehovah so long as I live, 33
 I will praise my God while I have my being !
and so shall my words please Him, 34
 my joy shall be in Jehovah !
as for sinners, they shall be consumed out of the earth, 35
 and the ungodly shall come to an end !
Praise thou Jehovah, O my soul.

Note. The order of creation as given in Genesis is exactly followed here. Cp. v. 2, the light; vv. 2—4, the heavens; vv. 5—18, the dry land; vv. 19—23, the heavenly bodies; vv. 24—26, fish and fowls; 27—30, man and beast.

Ver. 2. *like a curtain*. Cp. Is. xl. 22, "It is He that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in."

Ver. 3. *the beams of His chambers*. Cp. Am. ix. 6, "It is He that buildeth His stories in the heavens." As the under and dark clouds are represented as the foundations of heaven, so the lighter and etherial clouds form its upper chambers or stories.

Ver. 4. *the flaming fire, i. e. the lightnings*.

Vv. 5—9. Cp. Job xxxviii. 8.

Vv. 7, 8. *are afraid unto the place, i. e. the waters flee in terror to their appointed beds*.

Vv. 10—18. Cp. Job xxxviii. 26.

Vv. 19, 20. Cp. Job xxxviii. 12.

Ver. 24. *riches, i. e. the riches of Thy creation*.

Ver. 26. *with Thee*, lit. with Him, *i. e. Jehovah*. Cp. Job xli. 5, "Wilt thou play with him [the Leviathan] as with a bird?" The meaning in both these passages is that these monsters so dangerous to man are subdued and tame to Jehovah as the smaller animals to man.

§ 133. PSALM CVI,

IS so closely connected with the 107th Psalm that neither can be fully understood apart from the other. Both Psalms are composed probably in Babylon by exiles, to whom the privilege of return with 'the captivity' had been denied¹.

The 106th is an earnest prayer for deliverance and reunion in the Holy Land. All hope is centred in God's infinite mercy, which becomes more and more visible as the sense of national sin deepens. If the history of the Israelites of old is a lengthy record of transgressions, it is also a record of the innumerable mercies of Jehovah.

¹ § 133 Ps.
cvi. 4, 5, 43;
§ 134 Ps. cvii.
3 (note).

To review the past is to recall to the Lord His loving-kindnesses, and to appeal once more for that mercy which had never failed His people, from the time of their misery in Egypt to their oppression and captivity in Babylon. The completion of the Temple at Jerusalem would inspire a hope in the breast even of those who had no immediate prospect of return.

[*Chorus.*]

<i>Give thanks unto Jehovah, for He is gracious,</i>	1
<i>and His mercy endureth for ever!</i>	
Who can express the noble acts of Jehovah,	2
or shew forth all His praise?	
Blessed are all they that always keep judgment,	3
and do righteousness.	

The Priest

by reciting the history of the past, setteth forth the loving mercy of God.

Remember me, O Jehovah, according to the favour Thou bearest unto Thy people,	4
O visit me with Thy salvation,	
that I may see the felicity of Thy chosen,	5
and rejoice in the gladness of Thy people,	
and give thanks with Thine inheritance!	
We have sinned with our fathers,	6
we have done amiss and dealt wickedly!	
Our fathers regarded not Thy wonders in Egypt,	7
neither kept they Thy great goodness in remembrance,	
but were disobedient at the sea, even at the Red Sea;	

nevertheless He helped them for His Name's sake, 8
that He might make His power to be known ;
He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up ; 9
so He led them through the deep as through a wilder-
ness,
and He saved them from the adversary's hand, 10
and delivered them from the hand of the enemy ;
as for those that troubled them, the waters overwhelmed them, 11
there was not one of them left ;
then believed they His words, 12
and sang praise unto Him :
but within a while they forgat His works, 13
and would not abide His counsel,
and lust came upon them in the wilderness, 14
and they tempted God in the desert ;
so He gave them their desire, 15
and sent leanness withal into their soul :
they spake against Moses also in the camp, 16
and Aaron, the saint of Jehovah ;
so the earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, 17
and covered the company of Abiram,
and fire was kindled in their company, 18
the flame burnt up the ungodly :
they made a calf in Horeb, 19
and worshipped the molten image,
and changed their glory 20
into the similitude of a calf that eateth hay,
and they forgat God their saviour, 21
who had done so great things in Egypt,
wondrous works in the land of Ham, 22
and fearful things by the Red Sea :

so He said, He would have destroyed them, 23
 had not Moses His chosen stood before Him in the gap,
 to turn away His wrathful indignation, lest He should destroy them.
Yea, they thought scorn of that pleasant land, 24
 and gave no credence unto His word,
but murmured in their tents, 25
 and hearkened not unto the voice of Jehovah ;
then lift He up His hand and swear 26
 to overthrow them in the wilderness,
to cast out their seed among the nations 27
 and to scatter them in the lands.
They joined themselves unto Baal-peor, 28
 and ate the offerings of the dead ;
thus they provoked Him to anger with their own inventions, 29
 and the plague was great among them :
then stood up Phineas and prayed, 30
 and so the plague ceased,
and that was counted unto him for righteousness, 31
 among all posterities for evermore.
They angered Him also at the waters of Meribah, 32
 so that He punished Moses for their sake,
because they provoked his spirit, 33
 so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips :
neither destroyed they the heathen 34
 as Jehovah commanded them,
but were mingled among the heathen, 35
 and learned their works,
insomuch that they worshipped their idols, 36
 which were a snare unto them ;
yea, they offered their sons
 and their daughters unto devils,

and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of
their daughters, 37
whom they offered unto the idols of Canaan,
and the land was defiled with blood ;
thus were they stained with their own works, 38
and went a whoring with their own inventions :
therefore was the wrath of Jehovah kindled against His people, 39
insomuch that He abhorred His own inheritance,
and He gave them over into the hand of the heathen, 40
and they that hated them were lords over them ;
their enemies oppressed them 41
and had them in subjection :
many a time did He deliver them, 42
but they rebelled against Him with their own inventions,
and were brought down in their wickedness ;
nevertheless when He saw their adversity, 43
He heard their complaint ;
He thought upon His covenant, 44
and pitied them according to the multitude of His mercies ;
yea, He made all those
that led them away captive to pity them.

Chorus.

Deliver us, O Jehovah, our God, 45
and gather us from among the heathen,
that we may give thanks unto Thy holy Name,
and make our boast of Thy praise !

Priest.

Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel, 46
from everlasting and world without end,
and let all the people say, AMEN.

Ver. 1. Cp. § 101 Ps. cxviii. 1—4.

Ver. 3. *keep judgment, i. e.* fulfil their duty.

Vv. 7—13. Cp. Exod. xiv—xvi.

Vv. 19—22. Cp. Ex. xxxii—xxxiv.

Vv. 24—27. Cp. Num. xiv.

Ver. 26. *lift He up His hand.* Cp. Deut. xxxii. 40, "For I lift up My hand to heaven, and say, 'I live for ever.'"

Vv. 28—31. Cp. Num. xxv.

Ver. 28. *the dead, i. e.* dead idols as opposed to the living God.

Ver. 32. *Meribah.* Cp. Num. xx. 13.

§ 134. PSALM CVII.

¹ § 133 Ps. cvi. and introduction.

² 7. 3 and note.

LIKE the preceding¹, this is an antiphonal* Psalm sung by a chorus and its leader, and probably concluded by the priest. It contains the thanksgiving of exiles², apparently not yet returned to Jerusalem but already escaped from the thralldom of Babylon.

* The italics indicate the parts in which the chorus joined; the main body of the Psalm is sung only by the leader.

Thanksgiving to God for the reunion of the scattered exiles,

<i>O give thanks unto Jehovah, for He is gracious,</i>	1
<i>and His mercy endureth for ever!</i>	
So let them sing, whom Jehovah hath redeemed,	2
and delivered from the hand of the enemy,	
and gathered them out of the lands,	3
from the east and from the west,	
from the north and from the sea!	

I.

some of whom had been delivered from wanderings and famine,

- Such as went astray in the wilderness out of the way, 4
 and found no city to dwell in,—
 hungry and thirsty, 5
 their soul fainted in them !
 so when they cried unto Jehovah in their trouble, 6
 He delivered them out of their distress.
 He led them forth by the right way, 7
 that they might go to a city, where they might dwell ;
O that these would praise Jehovah for His goodness, 8
and the wonders that He doeth for the children of men,
 for He satisfied the empty soul, 9
 and filled the hungry soul with goodness !

II.

from prison,

- Such as sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death, 10
 being fast bound in misery and iron,
 because they rebelled against the words of God, 11
 and lightly regarded the counsel of the most Highest—
 He brought down their heart through heaviness, 12
 they fell down and there was none to help them ;
 so when they cried unto Jehovah in their trouble, 13
 He delivered them out of their distress.
 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, 14
 and brake their bonds in sunder ;
O that these would praise Jehovah for His goodness, 15
and the wonders that He doeth for the children of men,
 for He hath broken the gates of brass, 16
 and smitten the bars of iron in sunder.

III.

from sickness,

Such as were foolish by reason of their offences 17
and afflicted because of their wickedness,
whose soul abhorred all manner of meat, 18
and they were even hard at death's door;
so when they cried unto Jehovah in their trouble, 19
He delivered them out of their distress :
for He sent His word and healed them, 20
He saved them from their destruction :
O that these would praise Jehovah for His goodness, 21
and the wonders that He doeth for the children of men,
and offer unto Him the sacrifice of thanksgiving, 22
and tell out His works with gladness!

IV.

from perils by sea.

Such as go down to the sea in ships, 23
and occupy their business in great waters,
these men see the works of Jehovah, 24
and His wonders in the deep ;
for at His word the stormy wind ariseth, 25
which lifteth up the waves thereof ;
they are carried up to the heaven and down again to the
deep ; 26
their soul melteth away because of the trouble :
they reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, 27
and are at their wits' end ;
so when they cry unto Jehovah in their trouble, 28
He delivereth them out of their distress ;

He maketh the storm to cease 29
 so that the waves thereof are still :
 then are they glad because they are at rest, 30
 so He bringeth them to the haven where they would be ;
O that these would praise Jehovah for His goodness, 31
and His wonders that He doeth for the children of men,
 and exalt Him in the congregation of the people, 32
 and praise Him in the seat of the elders !

V.

The praise of God as the Creator and Preserver of His people.

He turneth the floods into a wilderness, 33
 and the water-springs into dry ground ;
 a fruitful land maketh He barren, 34
 for the wickedness of them that dwell therein ;
 again, He maketh the wilderness a standing water, 35
 and water-springs of a dry ground ;
 and there He setteth the hungry, 36
 and they build them a city to dwell in ;
 they sow their land and plant vineyards, 37
 to yield them fruits of increase ;
 He blesseth them, so that they multiply exceedingly, 38
 and suffereth not their cattle to decrease ;
 again, when they are minished and brought low, 39
 through oppression, through any plague or trouble,
 He poureth contempt upon princes 40
 and causeth them wander out of the way in a wilderness ;
 yet helpeth He the poor out of misery, 41
 He maketh him households like a flock of sheep ;

the righteous will consider this and rejoice, 42
 and the mouth of all wickedness shall be stopped.
Whoso is wise will ponder these things, 43
and they shall understand the loving-kindness of Jehovah.

Ver. 3. *sea, i. e.* from the context, the south. This cannot therefore be spoken with reference to Palestine, for in that case the sea always means the west, (cp. Num. xxxiv. 6, "And as for the western border, ye shall even have the great sea for a border; this shall be your west border." Josh. i. 4, Ezek. xlvii. 20;) but to Babylon (cp. Isaiah xxi. 1). From this it would seem the writer is still in Babylon.

Vv. 8, 15, 21, 31. *O that these, i. e. such as in vv. 4, 10, 17, 33.*

Ver. 16. *Gates of brass*, borrowed from Is. xlv. 2, "I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron."

Ver. 40. *them, i. e.* the princes, the oppressors of Israel. From Job xii. 21, xxi. 24.

Ver. 43. This verse is an exhortation probably from the priest to the people to meditate on the ways of God.

§§ 135, 136. PSALMS CXI, CXII.

¹§ See introduction to § 130 Ps. cxix.

THESE two Alphabetical¹ Psalms are closely connected together: in the first are proclaimed the praise, the greatness and the works of Jehovah, in the second the praise, the greatness and the works of His worshippers.

§ 135. PSALM CXI.

AN ALPHABETICAL PSALM.

A ll my heart shall praise Jehovah,	1
B efore the congregation of the righteous ;	
D eeds of goodness are the deeds of Jehovah,	2
E arnestly desired of all them that have pleasure therein ;	
F or His righteousness endureth for ever,	3
G lorious and honourable is His work ;	
H e hath made His wonderful works to be remembered,	4
I n Jehovah is compassion and goodness ;	
J ehovah hath given meat to them that fear Him,	5
K eeping His covenant for ever,	
L earning His people the power of His works,	6
M aking them to possess the heritage of the heathen ;	
N ought save truth and equity are the works of His hands,	7
O rdered and sure are His commands,	
P lanted fast for ever and ever,	8
R ighteous and true are His testimonies ;	
S alvation hath He sent unto His people,	9
T heir covenant hath He made fast for ever ;	
U pright and holy is His Name,	10
V erily, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,	
Y ea, a good understanding have all they that do thereafter ;	
Z ealously shall He be praised for ever.	

Ver. 6. This is one of the numerous passages of Scripture which announce the advent of a great kingdom, of which Jehovah should be King and His chosen people the vicegerents. See § 136 Ps. cxii. 2. For the growth of this idea, see § 37, § 63 notes.

§ 136. PSALM CXII.

AN ALPHABETICAL PSALM.

A blessing is on them that fear Jehovah,
 Blessed is he that hath delight in His commandments;
Dominion shall be to his seed upon earth,
 Ever shall the generation of the faithful be blessed;
Fulness and riches shall be in his house,
 Great is his righteousness for ever;
He is merciful, loving and righteous;
 In the darkness there ariseth a light for the godly;
Joyful is he that sheweth favour and lendeth,
 Knowledge shall he have to plead his cause!
Lo! he shall never be moved,
 Memorials of the righteous shall endure for ever;
Never shall he be afraid of any evil tidings,
 On Jehovah he leaneth with a fixed heart;
Planted firmly is his heart; he will not shrink;
 Revenged shall he be upon his enemies;
Scattering abroad, he giveth to the poor;
 Truë and steadfast is his righteousness for ever,
 Uplifted shall be his horn—with honour,
Vexation shall seize the ungodly, when he seeth it;
 With his teeth he shall gnash and consume away;
 Yea, the desire of the ungodly shall perish.

§§ 137, 138. PSALMS CXIII, CXIV.

THESE two Psalms form part of a Passover service. That the second part is a sequel to the first may be inferred from the fact that in the second all mention of Jehovah is made by means of the pronoun¹, presupposing¹ Ps. cxiv. 2. the use of the actual name before. A sacrifice may have been offered in the interval between the two Psalms.

No where have we a finer picture of the great Exodus from Egypt, and of the throes of nature and of nations which attended the birth of the Israelitish kingdom.

[PSALM CXIII.]

God the deliverer at all times,

Praise Jehovah, O ye servants,	1
Praise the Name of Jehovah!	
blessed be the Name of Jehovah,	2
from this time forth for evermore!	
from the rising up of the sun unto the going down of the same, 3	
the Name of Jehovah be praised!	
Jehovah is high above all nations,	4
and His glory above the heavens!	
Who is like unto Jehovah, our God,	5
that hath His throne on high,	
and yet humbleth Himself to behold	6
the things that are in heaven and in earth?	

Who taketh up the lowly out of the dust, 7
and lifteth the poor out of the mire,
that He may set him to rule with the princes, 8
even with the princes of His people ;
Who setteth the barren woman to rule over the house, 9
and to be a joyful mother of children.

[PSALM CXIV.]

and especially of Israel from Egypt.

When Israel came out of Egypt, 1
and the house of Jacob from among the strange people,
Judah was His sanctuary 2
and Israel His dominion :
the sea saw that and fled, 3
Jordan was driven back ;
the mountains skipped like rams, 4
and the little hills like young sheep.
What aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest ; 5
and thou, Jordan, that thou wast driven back ?
ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams, 6
and ye little hills, like young sheep ?
Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, 7
at the presence of the God of Jacob ;
Who turned the hard rock into a standing water, 8
and the flint stone into a springing well.

Ps. cxiii. Vv. 7, 8. These verses are almost a transcription of 1 Sam. ii. 6—8.

Ver. 9. *barren*. Barrenness deprived the lawful wife of the rule, as in the case of Sarah.

Ps. cxiv. Ver. 3. *the sea*. See Ex. xiv. and cp. Hab. iii. 8.

Jordan. See Josh. iii.

Ver. 4. *mountains, i. e. Sinai*. See Ex. xix. Cp. the older Psalm xxix. 6 (§ 7) and Hab. iii. 10, "The mountains saw Thee and they trembled."

Ver. 8. *rock*. See Ex. xvii. Numb. xx.

§ 139. PSALM CXVII.

The praise of Jehovah.

Praise Jehovah, all ye peoples,
 magnify Him, all ye nations of the earth!
 for His merciful kindness is ever towards us,
 and the truth of Jehovah endureth for ever.
 Praise Jehovah!

§§ 140—143. PSALMS LXXXVI, CXLIII, CXLIV, CVIII.

WHENEVER in these times, the nation awakes from the apathy which marks a period of decay, it is not the life of the present but the history of the past, to which the burst of enthusiasm is due. The ideas and even the very words of older Psalmists are strung together into new Psalms, to keep up with their familiar tones the flagging courage of the nation. To this group belong the four succeeding Psalms.

§ 140. PSALM LXXXVI.

I.

Prayer to God who will help, for He is good,

Bow down Thine ear, O Jehovah, and hear me,
 for I am poor and in misery!

I

preserve Thou my soul, for I am holy, 2
my God, save Thy servant,
that putteth His trust in Thee!
be merciful unto me, O Lord, 3
for I will call daily upon Thee;
comfort the soul of Thy servant, 4
for unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul!
for Thou, O Lord, art good and gracious, 5
and of great mercy unto all that call upon Thee.

II.

Who can help, for He ruleth over the nations,

Give ear, O Jehovah, unto my prayer, 6
ponder the voice of my humble desires;
in the time of my trouble I will call upon Thee, 7
for Thou wilt hear me!
among the gods there is none like unto Thee, O Lord, 8
there is not one that can do as Thou doest;
all nations, whom Thou hast made, 9
shall come and worship Thee, O Lord,
and shall glorify Thy Name;
for Thou art great and doest wondrous things, 10
Thou, O God, and Thou alone.

III.

in Whose ways the Psalmist will ever walk,

Teach me Thy way, O Jehovah, 11
and I will walk in Thy truth,
O knit my heart unto Thee, that I may fear Thy Name!
I will thank Thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart, 12
and will praise Thy Name for evermore,

for great is Thy mercy toward me, 13
and Thou hast delivered my soul from the nethermost hell.

Whom he will ever trust in danger.

O God! the proud are risen against me, 14
and the company of violent men seek after my soul,
and have not set Thee before their eyes;
but Thou, Lord, art a God full of compassion and mercy, 15
long suffering, plenteous in goodness and truth.
O turn Thee unto me, and have mercy upon me, 16
give Thy servant Thy strength,
and help the son of Thine handmaid!
shew some token upon me for good, 17
that they who hate me may see it and be ashamed,
because Thou, O Jehovah, hast holpen me and comforted
me.

Ver. 1. Cp. § 72 Ps. xl. 16, 20, 21.

Ver. 2. Cp. § 15 Ps. iv. 3.

Ver. 4. Cp. § 77 Ps. xxv. 1.

Ver. 6. Cp. § 103 Ps. cxvi. 2.

Ver. 8. Cp. Ex. xv. 11.

Ver. 9. Cp. § 69 Ps. xxii. 27.

Ver. 11. Cp. § 24 Ps. xxvii. 13; § 44 Ps. v. 8; § 77 Ps. xxv. 3.

Ver. 14. Cp. § 48 Ps. liv. 3.

Ver. 15. Cp. Ex. xxxiv. 6.

Ver. 16. Cp. § 103 Ps. cxvi. 14.

§ 141. PSALM CXLIII.

I.

A prayer to God in time of suffering,

Hear my prayer, O Jehovah, and consider my desire, 1
 hearken unto me for Thy truth and righteousness' sake ;
and enter not into judgment with Thy servant, 2
 for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified ;
for the enemy hath persecuted my soul, 3
 he hath smitten my life down to the ground,
 he hath laid me in the darkness, as the men that have been
 long dead ;
therefore is my spirit vexed within me, 4
 and my heart within me is desolate.

II.

founded on His doings of old.

Yet do I remember the time past, 5
 I muse upon all Thy works,
 yea, I meditate on the works of Thy hands ;
I stretch forth my hands unto Thee, 6
 my soul gaspeth unto Thee as a thirsty land ;
hear me, O Jehovah, and that soon, for my spirit waxeth faint ! 7
 hide not Thy face from me,
 lest I be like unto them that go down to the grave !
O let me hear Thy loving-kindness betimes, for in Thee is my
 trust ; 8
 shew Thou me the way that I should walk in,
 for I lift up my soul unto Thee !
deliver me, O Jehovah, from mine enemies, 9
 for I flee unto Thee to hide me !

III.

Trust that God will hear the prayer of His servant.

Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth Thee, for Thou art
 my God, 10
 Thy loving Spirit shall lead me in a plain path!
 for Thy name's sake Thou wilt quicken me, O Jehovah, 11
 and for Thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of
 trouble,
 and of Thy mercy Thou wilt slay mine enemies, 12
 and destroy all them that seek my life,
 for I am Thy servant!

Ver. 2. Cp. Job xiv. 3.

Ver. 3. Cp. § 58 Ps. lxxxviii. 4, 5; Lam. iii. 6.

Ver. 4. Cp. § 42 Ps. cxlii. 3, § 81 Ps. lxxvii. 3.

Ver. 5. Cp. § 81 Ps. lxxvii. 6.

Ver. 6. Cp. § 50 Ps. lxiii. 2.

Ver. 7. Cp. § 56 Ps. xxviii. 1.

Vv. 8, 10. Cp. § 75 Ps. li. 10—13.

§ 142. PSALM CXLIV. 1—11.

A COMPILATION of older passages, apparently selected for the warlike spirit which is common to them all; the six concluding verses have been given above¹ as ^{1 770. 12—15, sec § 17.} the only extant portion of a longer Psalm, really the work of David.

I.

Blessed be Jehovah, my stronghold, 1
 who teacheth my hands to war,
 and my fingers to fight;

my hope and my fortress, 2
my castle and my deliverer,
my shield, in whom I trust,
Who subdueth the peoples under me ;
Jehovah, what is man that Thou hast such respect unto him, 3
or the son of man that Thou so regardest him ?
man is like a thing of nought, 4
his time is like a shadow that passeth away.

II.

Bow Thy heavens, O Jehovah, and come down, 5
touch the mountains, and they shall smoke,
cast forth Thy lightnings and tear them, 6
shoot out Thine arrows and consume them,
send down Thine hand from above, 7
deliver me and take me out of the great waters,
from the hand of a strange people,
whose mouth talketh of vanity, 8
and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood !

III.

I will sing a new song unto Thee, O God, 9
and sing praises unto Thee upon a ten-stringed lute !
Who givest victory unto kings, 10
and hast delivered David Thy servant from the peril of
the sword ;
take me and deliver me from the hand of a strange people, 11
whose mouth talketh of vanity,
and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.

Vv. 1, 2, 5—7. Cp. § 12 Ps. xviii. 34, 1, 48, 9, 14, 16.

Ver. 3. Cp. § 9 Ps. viii. 4.

Ver. 4. Cp. Job xiv. 2.

Ver. 5. Cp. § 132 Ps. civ. 32.

Vv. 7, 11. Cp. § 12 Ps. xviii. 44.

Ver. 8. *right hand*, *i. e.* which was uplifted, when an oath was taken.
Cp. § 103 Ps. cxvi. 26 and Deut. xxxii. 40.

§ 143. PSALM CVIII.

TO these Psalms, compiled from earlier ones, is to be added Psalm cviii. which is made up of § 52 Psalm lvii. 8—12 and § 11 Psalm lx. 5—12. For composite Psalms see § 24 Psalm xxvii. note.

§§ 144—153. PSALMS CV, CXXXV, CXXXVI, CXLV—
CXLVII, XXXIII, CXLIX, CXLVIII, CL.

A TIME of foreign domination could not fail to bring with it the ever-recurring thought, ‘shall not God restore His own? shall not God, whose immediate presence with His people is seen in all the great events of their history¹, manifest Himself once more and restore the kingdom to Israel?’ The undying faith that God would not break His covenant with His people, alone made the restoration of the national existence possible. How and when the deliverance was to be accomplished, presented itself in different ways to different minds, but the certainty of its ultimate fulfilment was heroically cherished by the

¹ § 144 Ps. cv. 5, etc.

nobler spirits among the Israelites, and was destroyed neither by the oppressive tyranny of the Babylonians, nor

² Neh. ii. 9; by the malicious interference of the Persian satraps².
iii. 7.

It is no wonder then that the successful building of the walls and the restoration of the ancient ritual³ seemed like a ray of light in the darkness, the dawn of the coming

³ Ezra viii. 17; xvi. 27; viii. 36.

deliverance⁴. They were not yet, it is true, a free people, but there were many signs that the tide of evil was turned. They saw the theocracy once more established and heard

⁴ Pss. xxxiii. cxlv—cl.

God's Law⁵, the code of that theocracy, read in their Temple and by their rulers. They could feel themselves, like the Israelites of old, striving to keep their foothold in Canaan and fighting again the battles of the Judges⁶;

⁵ Ezra xi. 3.

and they saw that even in foreign countries men of their nation were not always despised. Thus Ezra and Nehemiah were no doubt but samples of many Jews, who by their intercourse with the foreigner had won for their nation a respect which extended as far as their wanderings had reached. It is possible that about this time, a

⁶ Neh. vi. 1. Cp. § 144 Ps. cv.

third Court, the Court of the Gentiles⁷, was added to the Temple, a pledge at once of widening hopes and widening influence⁸.

⁷ Cp. 3 Mac. i. 9; 4 Mac. iv. 11, and *Dict. of the Bible*, 'Temple of Zerubabel.'

⁸ Mal. i. 11. § 152 Ps. cxlviii. 11; § 115 Ps. xlvii. 9.

From this time of reviving national life, we have a group of Psalms, intimately connected by thought and expression, which may be regarded as the work of one author.

§ 144. PSALM CV.

I.

The praise of God who has protected His own people

O give thanks unto Jehovah, and call upon His Name, 1
tell the peoples what things He hath done.
O let your songs be of Him, and praise Him, 2
and let your talking be of all His wondrous works;
rejoice in His holy Name, 3
let the heart of them rejoice that seek Jehovah:
seek Jehovah and His strength, 4
seek His face evermore;
remember the marvellous works that He hath done, 5
His wonders and the judgments of His mouth,
O ye seed of Abraham His servant, 6
ye children of Jacob His chosen!

II.

in the time of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob,

He is Jehovah, our God, 7
His judgments are in all the world;
He hath been alway mindful of His covenant, 8
of the promise made to a thousand generations,
even the covenant that He made with Abraham, 9
and the oath that He sware unto Isaac,
and appointed the same unto Jacob for a law, 10
and to Israel for an everlasting covenant,
saying, 'unto thee I give the land of Canaan, 11
the lot of your inheritance!'

when there were yet but a few of them,
and they strangers in the land,
what time they went from one nation to another,
from one kingdom to another people;
He suffered no man to do them wrong,
but reprov'd even kings for their sake;
'touch not Mine anointed,
and do My prophets no harm!'

of Joseph,

Moreover He called for a dearth upon the land,
and destroyed all the provision of bread;
but He had sent a man before them,
even Joseph, who was sold to be a bond-servant,
whose feet they hurt in the stocks,
the iron entered into his soul,
until the time that His word came,
the word of Jehovah cleared him;
the king sent and delivered him,
the prince of the people let him go free;
he made him lord of his house,
and ruler of all his substance;
that he might form his princes to his pleasure,
and teach his senators wisdom;

of Moses in Egypt,

so Israel came into Egypt,
and Jacob was a stranger in the land of Ham:
and He increased His people exceedingly,
and made them stronger than their enemies,—
whose heart He turned so that they hated His people,
and dealt untruly with His servants;

then sent He Moses His servant, 26
 and Aaron whom He had chosen ;
 these shewed His signs upon them, 27
 His wonders in the land of Ham.
 He sent darkness, and it was dark, 28
 and they were not obedient unto His word,
 He turned the waters into blood, 29
 and slew their fish ;
 their land brought forth frogs, 30
 yea, even in the king's chambers ;
 He spake the word, and there came all manner of flies 31
 and lice in all their quarters :
 He gave them hailstones for rain, 32
 and flames of fire in their land ;
 He smote their vines also and fig-trees, 33
 and destroyed the trees that were in their coasts ;
 He spake the word, and the grasshoppers came 34
 and caterpillars innumerable,
 and did eat up all the grass in their land,
 and devoured the fruit of their ground ;
 and smote all the first-born in their land, 35
 even the chief of all their strength.
 He brought them forth also with silver and gold, 36
 there was not one feeble person among His tribes.
 Egypt was glad at their departing, 37
 for they were afraid of them ;
 and in the wilderness ;
 He spread out a cloud to be a covering, 38
 and fire to give light in the nightseason ;
 at their desire He brought quails, 39
 and He filled them with the bread of heaven ;

He opened the rock of stone, and the waters flowed out, 40
 so that rivers ran in the dry places;
 for why? He remembered His holy promise 41
 and Abraham His servant;
and gave them Canaan,
 so He brought forth His people with joy, 42
 and His chosen with gladness;
 and gave them the lands of the heathen, 43
 and they took the labours of the peoples in possession,
on the condition that they kept His covenant.
 if only they would keep His statutes, 44
 and observe His law.

Vv. 8—15. Cp. Gen. xii—xxv.

Ver. 15. Cp. Gen. xx. 7.

Vv. 16—24. Cp. Gen. xxxvii—l.

Ver. 17. Lit. staff of bread. Cp. Is. iii. 1.

Ver. 22. *teach his senators, i. e.* be the leader of his ministers.

§ 145. PSALM CXXXV.

A SONG OF PRAISE.

The greatness of God in creation,

O praise ye the name of Jehovah, 1
 praise it, ye servants of Jehovah,
 ye that stand in the house of Jehovah, 2
 in the courts of the house of our God.
 O praise Jehovah, for Jehovah is gracious, 3
 O sing praises unto His Name, for it is lovely.
 for why? Jehovah hath chosen Jacob unto Himself, 4
 and Israel for His own possession.

for I know that Jehovah is great, 5
 and that our God is above all gods;
 whatsoever Jehovah pleaseth, that He doeth 6
 in heaven and in earth,
 in the sea and in all deep places;
 He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth, 7
 He sendeth forth lightnings with the rain,
 He bringeth the wind out of His treasures;

and in His doings for His people,

He smote the first-born of Egypt, 8
 both of man and beast;
 He sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O thou land
 of Egypt, 9
 upon Pharaoh, and all his servants;
 He smote divers nations, 10
 and slew many kings,—
 Sihon king of the Amorites and Og the king of Basan, 11
 and all the kingdoms of Canaan,
 and gave their land to be an heritage, 12
 even an heritage unto Israel His people;
 Thy Name, O Jehovah, endureth for ever; 13
 so doth Thy memorial, O Jehovah, from one generation
 to another:
 for Jehovah will judge His people, 14
 and be gracious unto His servants.

contrasted with the vanity of idols.

As for the images of the heathen, they are but silver and
 gold, 15
 the work of men's hands;

they have mouths, and speak not ;	16
eyes have they, but they see not ;	
they have ears, and yet they hear not,	17
neither is there any breath in their mouths :	
they that make them shall be like unto them,	18
and so shall all they that put their trust in them !	
Praise Jehovah, ye house of Israel,	19
praise Jehovah, ye house of Aaron,	
praise Jehovah, ye house of Levi,	20
praise Jehovah, ye that fear Jehovah ;	
praised out of Sion be Jehovah,	21
Who dwelleth at Jerusalem.	

Vv. 1, 2. Cp. § 97 Ps. cxxxiv. 1, 2.

Ver. 3. From § 46 Ps. lii. 10.

Ver. 7. From Jer. x. 13.

Vv. 15—18. Cp. § 102 Ps. cxv. 4—11.

§ 146. PSALM CXXXVI.

THE thoughts of the 135th Psalm here reappear in a different arrangement : the mention of each great act of Jehovah is followed by a burden, in which the whole congregation bear witness that the mercy of God is the true ground of His praise.

O give thanks unto Jehovah, for He is gracious,	1
<i>for His mercy endureth for ever !</i>	
O give thanks unto the God of all gods,	2
<i>for His mercy endureth for ever !</i>	
O give thanks unto the Lord of all lords,	3
<i>for His mercy endureth for ever !</i>	

Who alone doeth great wonders,	4
<i>for His mercy endureth for ever !</i>	
Who by His excellent wisdom made the heavens,	5
<i>for His mercy endureth for ever !</i>	
Who laid out the earth above the waters,	6
<i>for His mercy endureth for ever !</i>	
Who hath made the great lights,	7
<i>for His mercy endureth for ever !</i>	
the sun to rule the day,	8
<i>for His mercy endureth for ever !</i>	
the moon and the stars to govern the night,	9
<i>for His mercy endureth for ever !</i>	
Who smote the firstborn of Egypt,	10
<i>for His mercy endureth for ever !</i>	
and brought out Israel from among them,	11
<i>for His mercy endureth for ever !</i>	
with a mighty hand and stretched out arm,	12
<i>for His mercy endureth for ever !</i>	
Who divided the Red Sea in two parts,	13
<i>for His mercy endureth for ever !</i>	
and made Israel to go through the midst of it,	14
<i>for His mercy endureth for ever !</i>	
and overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea,	15
<i>for His mercy endureth for ever !</i>	
Who led His people through the wilderness,	16
<i>for His mercy endureth for ever !</i>	
Who smote great kings,	17
<i>for His mercy endureth for ever !</i>	
yea, and slew mighty kings,	18
<i>for His mercy endureth for ever !</i>	

Sihon king of the Amorites,
for His mercy endureth for ever!
and Og the king of Basan,
for His mercy endureth for ever!
and gave away their land for an heritage,
for His mercy endureth for ever!
even for an heritage unto Israel, His servant,
for His mercy endureth for ever!
Who remembered us when we were in trouble,
for His mercy endureth for ever!
and hath delivered us from our enemies,
for His mercy endureth for ever!
Who giveth food to all flesh,
for His mercy endureth for ever!
O give thanks unto the God of heaven,
for His mercy endureth for ever!

Ver. 1. In each verse, the words "O give thanks unto Jehovah" must supplied before the burden.

§ 147. PSALM CXLV.

AN ALPHABETICAL PSALM.

The praise of Jehovah for His mercy and faithfulness.

Alway will I magnify Thee, O God, my King,
and praise Thy Name for ever and ever;
Blessed art Thou every day,
and praised is Thy Name for ever and ever.
Consider how great Jehovah is, He is worthy to be praised,
His greatness past finding out.

- D**eclared are Thy works from one generation to another, 4
and Thy praise throughout all generations.
- E**very day will I be talking of Thy worship, 5
Thy glory, Thy praise and wondrous works ;
- F**or men shall speak of the might of Thy marvellous acts, 6
and I will also tell of Thy greatness.
- G**reat is Thy kindness, it shall be had in remembrance, 7
and men shall sing of Thy righteousness.
- H**ow gracious and merciful is Jehovah, 8
long suffering and of great goodness !
- J**ehovah is loving unto every man, 9
and His mercy is over all His works.
- K**nown are Thy praises in Thy works, O Jehovah, 10
and Thy saints give thanks unto Thee.
- L**o, they shew the glory of Thy kingdom, 11
and talk of Thy power,
- M**aking Thy power and the mightiness of Thy kingdom 12
to be known unto men.
- N**ever shall Thy kingdom be moved, 13
and Thy dominion endureth throughout all ages.
- O** Jehovah, how true art Thou in all Thy dealing,
how loving in all Thy works.
- P**rotected of Him are all such as fall, 14
yea, He lifteth up them that are bowed down.
- R**aise thine eyes unto Jehovah, 15
and He shall give thee thy meat in due season ;
- S**hall He not open His hand, 16
and fill all things living with plenteousness ?
- T**rust in Jehovah ; His ways are true, 17
and holy are all His works.

Verily Jehovah is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, 18
 yea, unto all such as call upon Him faithfully:
Whoso fear Him—He will hear their desire, 19
 He will hear their cry and will help them.
Yea, Jehovah preserveth all them that love Him, 20
 but scattereth abroad all the ungodly.
Zealously shall my mouth speak the praise of Jehovah, 21
 and let all flesh give thanks unto His holy Name
 for ever and ever.

Ver. 1. For note on alphabetical Psalms, see § 130 Ps. cxix.

Ver. 13. The absence of the 14th letter shews the omission of a verse, which is supplied in the LXX. as given above.

§ 148. PSALM CXLVI.

IN this Psalm the same exulting thoughts reappear as
 in the 103rd¹. The power of kings and princes is
 as nothing to him whose help is in the Lord his God².

¹ § 131.
² § 151.
 Ps. cxlix, introduction.

I.

Praise Jehovah, O my soul! 1
 while I live will I praise Jehovah,
 yea, as long as I have any being, I will sing praises unto
 my God.
 O put not your trust in princes 2
 nor in any child of man, for there is no help in him,
 for, when his breath goeth forth, he shall turn again to his
 earth, 3
 and then all his thoughts perish!

II.

Blessed is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help,	4
and whose hope is in Jehovah his God,	
Who made heaven and earth,	5
the sea, and all that therein is,	
Who keepeth His promise for ever ;	
Who helpeth them to right that suffer wrong,	6
Who feedeth the hungry.	

III.

Jehovah looseth men out of prison,	7
Jehovah giveth sight unto the blind,	
Jehovah helpeth them that are fallen,	8
Jehovah loveth the righteous,	
Jehovah careth for the strangers,	9
He defendeth the fatherless and widow ;	
as for the way of the ungodly, he turneth it upside down.	
Jehovah shall be King for evermore,	10
Thy God, O Sion, throughout all generations.	

Ver. 10. *Thy God, O Sion, i. e. shall be King throughout all generations.*

§ 149. PSALM CXLVII.

A PSALM in praise of God for the preservation of Israel and the complete restoration of Jerusalem. The Psalmist does not merely pour forth his gratitude for an earthly blessing; he is lost in wonder when he contemplates God the Omnipotent Creator and Ruler of the universe, condescending to guide His people as a shepherd and deigning to dwell with them that await His mercy. This contrast runs throughout the Psalm, which owes much of its beauty and vigour to the rapidity with which the transitions are made.

I.

The praise of God for rebuilding the city.

<i>O praise Jehovah,</i>	I
for it is a good and pleasant thing to sing praises unto our God,	
yea, a joyful and pleasant thing it is to be thankful!	
Jehovah doth build up Jerusalem,	2
and gather together the outcasts of Israel;	
He healeth those that are broken in heart,	3
and bindeth up their wounds;	
He telleth the number of the stars	4
and calleth them all by their names;	
great is our Lord and great is His power,	5
yea, and His wisdom is infinite;	
Jehovah setteth up the meek,	6
and bringeth the ungodly down to the ground!	

II.

His praise for the works of creation.

O sing unto Jehovah with thanksgiving,	7
sing praises upon the harp unto our God!	
Who covereth the heaven with clouds,	8
Who prepareth rain for the earth,	
Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains,	
Who giveth fodder unto the cattle,	9
and feedeth the young ravens that call upon Him;	
He hath no pleasure in the strength of a horse,	10
neither delighteth He in any man's legs;	
but Jehovah's delight is in them that fear Him,	11
and put their trust in His mercy!	

III.

His praise for restoring Sion to prosperity.

Praise Jehovah, O Jerusalem,	12
praise thy God, O Sion,	
for He hath made fast the bars of thy gates,	13
and hath blessed thy children within thee!	
He maketh peace in thy borders,	14
and filleth thee with the flour of wheat.	
He sendeth forth His commandment upon earth,	15
and His word runneth very swiftly;	
He giveth snow like wool,	16
and scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes.	
He casteth forth His ice like morsels,	17
and who is able to abide His frost?	
He sendeth out His word, and melteth them,	18
He bloweth with His wind, and the waters flow!	

He sheweth His word unto Jacob, 19
 His statutes and ordinances unto Israel.
 He hath not dealt so with any nation, 20
 neither have the heathen knowledge of His laws.

Ver. 10. *horse, i. e. cavalry. any man's legs, i. e. infantry.* Cp. Is. xxxi. 1.

Ver. 18. *them, i. e. the frost, the snow, and the hoar-frost.* God sendeth a thawing wind, and the ice is broken up.

§ 150. PSALM XXXIII.

¹ See Appen-
dix B.

THAT this Psalm was a late addition to the Psalter may be seen from the absence of a superscription ¹.

There is nothing in its contents to determine the precise occasion for which it was composed, though it was obviously designed for a public festival² to celebrate a deliverance from some powerful heathen nation. We can conceive Zerubbabel or Nehemiah after the collapse of the Babylonian empire, striving in such a Psalm as this to arouse the returning Israelites to confidence in their invincible King,

³ *vv. 6—9.* whose are the heavens and the earth³, without whom the

⁴ *vv. 10—12; vv. 10—16.* wisdom of rulers and the strength of armies is powerless⁴, and who watches with sleepless eye over the welfare of them

⁵ *vv. 17, 18.* that fear His Name⁵.

A call to praise God,

Rejoice in Jehovah, O ye righteous, I
 for it becometh well the just to be thankful!

praise Jehovah with the harp, 2
 sing praises to Him with the ten-stringed lute !
 sing unto Him a new song, 3
 play skilfully with a loud noise !

I.

because He is the God, Who made and keepeth the universe,

For the word of Jehovah is true, 4
 and all His works are faithful.
 He loveth righteousness and judgment, 5
 the earth is full of the goodness of Jehovah ;
 by the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, 6
 and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth ;
 He gathered the waters of the sea together, as it were in a
 bottle, 7
 and laid up the deep as in a treasure-house ;
 let all the earth fear Jehovah ; 8
 stand in awe of Him, all ye that dwell in the world !
 for HE spake, and it was done, 9
 HE commanded, and it stood fast :
 Jehovah bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought, 10
 and maketh the devices of the peoples to be of none effect ;
 the counsel of Jehovah shall endure for ever, 11
 and the thoughts of His heart from generation to generation.

II.

and hath blessed His people Israel.

Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah, 12
 and blessed are the folk that He hath chosen to Him to
 be His inheritance !

Jehovah looked down from heaven, 13
 and beheld all the children of men ;
 from the habitation of His dwelling
 He considereth all them that dwell on the earth ;
 He fashioneth all the hearts of them, 14
 and understandeth all their works.
 There is no king that can be saved by the multitude of an
 host, 15
 neither is any mighty man delivered by much strength ;
 a horse is counted but a vain thing to save a man, 16
 neither shall he deliver any man by his great strength ;
 behold, the eye of Jehovah is upon them that fear Him, 17
 upon them that hope in His mercy,
 to deliver their soul from death, 18
 and to feed them in the time of dearth.
 Our soul tarrieth patiently for Jehovah, 19
 He is our help and our shield ;
 for our heart rejoiceth in Him, 20
 because we have hoped in His holy Name ;
 let Thy merciful kindness, O Jehovah, be upon us, 21
 like as we do put our trust in Thee.

Ver. 3. *new, i. e.* a song which springs up freshly from a thankful heart.
 Cp. Lam. iii. 23, "The Lord's mercies are new every morning." Is. xlii. 10.
skilfully. The same expression occurs 1 Sam. xvi. 17.

Ver. 7. An allusion not to a special act, as Ex. xv. 8, but to the ordinary
 government of the Creator. Cp. § 132 Ps. civ. 9, Job xxvi. 10.

bottle. So Job xxxviii. 37, "Who can stay the bottles of heaven?"

treasure-house. Cp. Job xxxviii. 22.

Ver. 16. Cp. § 21 Ps. xx. 7, and § 149 Ps. cxlvii. 10.

§ 151. PSALM CXLIX.

A SONG of victory due to the reawakened enthusiasm consequent on the return from captivity¹. As the ¹ *z.* 4. pious Jews of the restoration loved to see in their return from Babylon a repetition of the great Exodus of their forefathers from Egypt, so in their struggles with the petty² ² *z.* 8, cp. Neh. vi. 1. princes and chieftains around, they would fain dream that they were fighting again the mighty battles of Joshua and Gideon. This devotion to the history of the past was not only inseparable from the revival of the Law, but was itself an important aid to the restoration of the national character and independence. It checked selfishness, kindled enthusiasm, assured them of the special protection of Jehovah. Thus by modelling its life upon the past, the nation at large learned, what their prophets and rulers had never ceased to teach, to live in and for the future also³.

³ See § 37.
§ 63 notes.

But this devotion to the past had another side. Reverence for their written records degenerated into worship of the letter; and their minds were too often closed to the wider lessons, which connexion with foreign nations had taught⁴, and to the higher view of national relations which ⁴ See §§ 35—39, introduction. had long ago been opened to the Psalmist and the Prophet. The spirit of exclusion and merciless extermination deemed necessary to the national existence⁵ at an earlier ⁵ *z.* 9, cp. Deut. vii. 2. period, revived at this later age to which, had they listened

⁶ Cp. § 100.
Ps. cxxxvii.
and
introduction
to Period IV.

to the teaching of the captivity⁶, it should have been distasteful and abhorrent. It must ever be a matter for regret that the patriotism and devotion embodied in the glowing language of these Psalms, should be marred by passages of vindictive exclusiveness. Indeed the use which has been made of this Psalm, shews how easily devotion to the most sacred associations and zeal for the most spiritual religion, may become the ministers of human prejudice and passion.

I.

Praise to God,

O sing unto Jehovah a new song,	1
let the congregation of saints praise Him!	
let Israel rejoice in Him that made him,	2
and let the children of Sion be joyful in their King;	
let them praise His Name in the dance,	3
let them sing praises unto Him with tabret and harp!	

II.

Who hath given His people victory over their enemies,

For Jehovah hath pleasure in His people,	4
He maketh glad the poor with victory;	
let the saints be joyful with glory,	5
let them rejoice in their beds,	
let the praise of God be in their mouth,	6
and a two-edged sword in their hands:	

III.

and will avenge them on the Heathen.

to be avenged of the heathen,	7
and to rebuke the peoples,	
to bind their kings with chains,	8
and their nobles with links of iron ;	
that, as it is written, they may be avenged of them ;	9
such honour have all His saints.	

Ver. 5. *beds, i. e.* this verse is best understood by comparing the condition in exile. Hos. vii. 14.

Ver. 6. Cp. Neh. iv. 17, 18.

§§ 152, 153. PSALMS CXLVIII, CL.

A SUMMONS to all creation to praise Jehovah. With these grand words the Psalter closes¹. ¹ See § 60 Ps. i. and Appendix A.

§ 152. PSALM CXLVIII.

I.

The praise of the Creator due from all in heaven,

O praise Jehovah from the heavens,	1
praise Him in the heights ;	
praise Him, all ye angels of His,	2
praise Him, all His host ;	
praise Him, sun and moon,	3
praise Him, all ye stars and light ;	
praise Him, ye heavens of heavens,	4
and ye waters that are above the heavens ;	

let them praise the Name of Jehovah, 5
for He commanded, and they were created:
He hath made them fast for ever and ever, 6
He hath given them a law which shall not be broken!

II.

in earth,

Praise Jehovah from the earth, 7
ye dragons and all deeps,
fire and hail, snow and ice, 8
wind and storm fulfilling His word;
mountains and all hills, 9
fruitful trees and all cedars,
beasts and all cattle, 10
worms and feathered fowls!
kings of the earth and all peoples, 11
princes and all judges of the world;
young men and maidens, 12
old men and children;

III.

and from His people.

let them praise the Name of Jehovah,
for His Name only is excellent,
and His praise above heaven and earth;
and He hath exalted the horn of His people, 13
all His saints praise Him,
even the children of Israel, even the people that serveth
Him!

Ver. 6. Cp. Esther i. 19; ix. 27.

Ver. 11. Cp. Mal. i. 11; § 115 Ps. xlvii. 10.

§ 153. PSALM CL.

Praise God in His sanctuary,	1
praise in the firmament of His power!	
praise Him in His noble acts,	2
praise Him according to His excellent greatness!	
praise Him in the sound of the trumpet,	3
praise Him upon the lute and harp;	
praise Him in the cymbals and dances,	4
praise Him upon the loud cymbals.	
Let everything that hath breath, praise Jehovah.	

END OF THE PSALMS.

APPENDIX A.

On the origin and arrangement of the Psalter.

THE reader will doubtless wonder that in this edition the order of the existing Psalter is almost entirely disregarded. The reason of this apparent neglect is that the accepted order of the Psalms has tended to obscure their historical meaning, a fact well known to the careful student¹. That order is but the result of accidental growth, the Psalter itself resembling rather such a volume as would be produced if several different hymn-books were bound together than one carefully ordered selection. The superscriptions², if in any cases the work of the authors of the Psalms, are undoubtedly for the most part the gradual accretions of a later age, as liturgical use³ or internal criticism⁴ suggested.

The Psalter is composed of several smaller collections; this appears (1) from the repetition of the same Psalm in several places⁵, as for instance the 40th (§ 72) in the 70th; the 14th (§ 84) in the 53rd and parts of the 57th and 60th in the 108th (§ 143); (2) from the notice appended to the 72nd Psalm⁶, "The prayers of David, the son of Jesse

¹ Cp. Perowne, *The Book of Psalms*, Introduction, p. lxxxix. "Later Psalms may be found in the earlier Books, and earlier Psalms in the later... to give a reason for the place of each Psalm is as impossible as to give a reason for the order of the different Suras in the Koran." See also Stanley's *Jewish Church*, 2nd series, p. 585, on the authorship of the Books of the Old Testament.

See Appendix B.

³ As the musical directions, p. 462.

As the notices of authorship or history, p. 457.

⁵ Cp. the composite Psalm in 1 Chron. xvi., the occurrence of Ps. 18 in 2 Sam. xxii., and notes, pp. 6, 41, 82.

⁶ This forms v. 20 of the A. V.: for *prayers* as applied to Psalms, cp. the superscriptions of Pss. 17, 86, 90, 102, Hab. 3.

are ended"; which on the supposition of the Psalter being one work is contradictory to the assignment of 18 later psalms to David, and (3) from the want of uniformity in the doxologies¹ with which each division is concluded. Thus we have:

§ 29 Ps. xli. 13. Blessed be Jehovah, God of Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting!

Amen and Amen.

§ 63 Ps. lxxii. 18, 19. Blessed be Jehovah God, the God of Israel,
Who only doeth wondrous things;
and blessed be the Name of His majesty for ever,
and all the earth shall be filled with His majesty.

Amen, Amen!

§ 124 Ps. lxxxix. 50. Praised be Jehovah for evermore.

Amen and Amen.

The similarity of these doxologies points to a custom among the compilers of concluding each collection with a thanksgiving, perhaps after the form of one in use in the Temple (cp. § 133 Ps. cvi. 46 with 1 Chron. xvi. 36); but their diversity and the absence of any such doxology after the 150th shew them not to be the work of the last editor. That editor moreover would hardly have added the 20th verse to the doxology in Ps. 72, without any parallel in the other cases. These main divisions seem to be three; Pss. 1—41; Pss. 42—89; Pss. 90—150. It is true that the later Jews and most commentators have held that the Psalter is divided into five² Books; but this arises from mistaking Ps. cvi. 46 for a doxology separate from the Psalm, and from an endeavour to make the number of Books in the Psalter the same as that of the Books in the Pentateuch³.

¹ To the three doxologies given above has by some been added § 133 Ps. cvi. 46. Ewald, however, followed by others, sees no reason for separating v. 46 from the rest of the Psalm. The 45th and 46th verses are quoted together in 1 Chron. xvi. 35, 36.

² Pss. 1—41; 42—72; 73—89; 90—106; 107—150.

³ Cp. the forced coincidence of the number of the Books of the Hebrew Canon with the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and the further

The 1st division Pss. (1—41) is generally accepted as containing more Davidian psalms than the others: all except four¹ being assigned by the superscriptions to him, and of these eleven² have been held in this work to be certainly his.

The 'use or song of the bow'³ was handed down by memory, and this may at first have been the case with some of the old relics⁴ of David's time. In the time of Solomon however, or the kings of his century, a collection must have been formed to preserve the longer psalms; at any rate, whether previously compiled or not, they were arranged together about the time of Josiah, incorporated with others, which were supposed to be of the same date, and the name of David was given to the whole collection. This compiler (in the 7th century) probably wrote Ps. 1 (§ 60) as an introduction to the whole, and may have inserted Ps. 2 (§ 16) from some extant group of Solomon's songs⁵.

The further characteristics of this first division are the use of the word Jehovah, the presence of several historical notices, which appear to be trustworthy⁶, and the comparative meagreness of musical directions.

The 2nd division (Pss. 42—89) consists of two parts, one mainly assigned to David (Pss. 51—72), and the other to David's singers (Pss. 42—50; Pss. 73—89). It contains Books 2 and 3 of the supposed five Books; but the notice of the conclusion of the Davidian part after

coincidence (mentioned by Jerome) of the five double books with the five double letters.

¹ These are Pss. 1, 2, 10 (which really should be united to 9 as in LXX. see § 61), 33 (which has no superscription, and coming from a very late period, seems to have been once joined by mistake to 32).

² Pss. 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 32, and perhaps 23, 27.

³ § 18 2 Sam. i. 18. Cp. the superscription of Ps. 60, *to teach, i.e. to be learnt*.

⁴ Cp. §§ 10, 11 Pss. 110, 60.

⁵ Cp. 1 Kings iv. 32. *Song* is the general term; cp. titles of Pss. 45, 121, and Song of Solomon.

⁶ Pss. 3, 7, 18; that to Ps. 34 is not trustworthy; see Appendix B.

Ps. 72 is rather the mark of a change of subject than of the conclusion of a book¹.

Hence it has been suggested that the order of this collection has been changed, and that originally the Davidic section (51—72) came first, and was followed by the non-Davidic section (42—50 and 73—89).

The second division is characterized (1) by the use of Elohim, and not of Jehovah², (2) by the fullness of musical directions, (3) by the assignment of many psalms to traditionally celebrated musicians, (4) by the prevalence of historical inscriptions of an untrustworthy character³.

It contains only one really Davidic psalm⁴, viz. a fragment inlaid in a psalm of a later time; the collection seems to have been arranged by a compiler after the Captivity⁵, who had the special desire of the period to resuscitate all relics of David, whether genuine or not, and who took part in the restoration of the temple music as far as possible in its old form. In his reverence for the traditional founders of his art, he forgot the difference between the poet who composed the poem and the musicians who arranged the service, and thus attributed psalms to men, who, even had the psalms been the product of David's time, would not have been likely to have been the authors⁶.

¹ Cp. Job xxxi. 40; Jer. li. 64.

² Even in Pss. 53, 70, 71, which have appeared entirely or partly in Pss. 14, 40, 22, respectively: this confirms the theory which accounts for the absence of the name Jehovah by supposing that the compiler of this collection, in accordance with his own feelings or the custom of his time, scrupulously refrained from the use of the more awful name of Jehovah, and wrote Elohim in its place. This change was not completely carried out, for in the five last Psalms Jehovah reappears. For the origin of the scruple, see Lev. xxiv. 16; Deut. xxviii. 58; § 127 Ps. lxxxiii. 18, and article "Jehovah" in *Dict. of Bible*.

³ See Appendix B, p. 461.

⁴ Ps. 60, see §§ 11, 125.

⁵ But before the compilation of the third division; see Ps. 108, which repeats Pss. 57 and 60 in their Elohist form.

⁶ For the early distinction of poet and singer, cp. Ex. xv. 1, 20, 21. Cp.

The 3rd and concluding division (Pss. 90—150) has been divided into the 4th and 5th Books, from a mistaken interpretation of Ps. cvi. 46. It contains in itself several minor collections :

(1) The 15 pilgrim odes. Pss. 120—134: see § 85;

(2) The 20 Hallelujah psalms. Pss. 103—107; 111—118; 135, 136; 146—150. These are a group of Psalms evidently designed for Temple use, in which Hallelujah occurs either at the beginning or the close¹. We may imagine the singing and music to cease, and the people to the sound of the priests' trumpets to join in a mighty sound of "Praise Jehovah."

(3) Pss. 92—100, a group marked by the almost entire absence of superscriptions.

The further characteristics of this division are

(1) The comparative meagreness of the superscriptions,

(2) The existence of a few really Davidic psalms²,

(3) The return to the use of Jehovah³.

There is far less unity in this third division than in the two preceding and were it not the repetitions of previous psalms, it would not be necessary to suppose that it ever assumed its present form till its union with the other two⁴.

These three great collections were thus compiled at different times

the evident interest in musical details displayed by the author of the Books of Chronicles, especially 1 Ch. vi. xxv.; 2 Ch. v.

¹ Hallelujah occurs at the beginning and end of 106, 113, 115, 135, 146, 148, 149, 150, at the beginning only of 111, 112, and at the end of 104, 105, 116, 117, 147. It either does not occur, or has been accidentally omitted in 103, 107, 114 (part of 113), 118, 136 (another form of 135), which, however, are too much akin to the group to be separated from it. In LXX. Hallelujah is considered to be the superscription of these Psalms.

² Pss. 101, 110, 144. vv. 1—11.

³ Except in Ps. 108, which consists of 57 and 60 in their Elohist form; so Ps. lxxxvi. 14 is repeated from liv. 3: hence the third division is later than the 2nd.

⁴ Its compiler seems to have found Ps. 90 in some old collection, possibly attributed to Moses. Similarly Ps. 2 was placed at the head of the 1st collection.

and by different men¹, from materials which from various sources they found ready to their hands: for these psalms they either adapted the extant or traditionary superscriptions, or themselves invented new ones according to the use and nature of the psalm itself.

The concluding portion of the Psalter must have been known to the author of the Chronicles², and the whole is mentioned in Macca-bees³ as 'the (works) of David.'

In the LXX, a Greek translation made at Alexandria in the third century B.C., we find considerable changes, and a remarkable ignorance of the meaning of the musical inscriptions, hardly to be accounted for by distance from Jerusalem.

Some time then must be allowed between the final compilation of the Psalter, and its translation by the LXX, during which the musical terminology⁴ may have been forgotten, and fresh errors have accumulated with regard to the authorship of particular psalms⁵. The revision

¹ Cp. the avowed edition of some of the Proverbs of Solomon by "the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah."—Prov. xxv. 1.

² Cp. the Ps. in 1 Chron. xvi. How freely a compiler cut up any existing materials to suit his own purpose, may be seen from the fact, that vv. 8—22 come from Ps. cv. 1—15, vv. 23—33 from Ps. xcvi. 1—13; vv. 34—36 from Ps. cvi. 1, 47, 48. Cp. notes on pp. 6, 41, 82. It is instructive to notice that none of these psalms are referred to David in the superscriptions. May we not infer that in the time of the chronicler all the psalms were already associated with David?

³ Cp. 2 Macc. ii. 13.

⁴ Thus Michtam is translated "for inscription on a pillar," and most of their interpretations of the 10 Hebrew airs or measures have been rejected by modern Hebraists.

⁵ Thus we find that by the time of the LXX. two somewhat contradictory tendencies had crept in. One editor has seized almost every opportunity to attribute to David any psalm which had not previously been assigned to any other author; for instance, Pss. 33, 43, 71, 91, 93—99, 137. Another looked more doubtfully on the Davidian authorship; the manifest impossibility of David's weeping "by the waters of Babylon" induced him to append the words "by Jeremiah" to the title of 137, which is thus attributed to two authors: this same man probably shewed his historical knowledge by adding

cannot have been earlier than the time of Nehemiah, the latter half of the words "by Haggai and Zechariah" to the title of 138, already styled "a Psalm of David," by assigning the 71st to "the sons of Jonadab, and the first captives," and exhibited critical acumen by referring Pss. 76, 80 to the period of the Assyrian invasion.

Other changes will be found in Pss. 24, 27, 29, 31, 38, 48, 66, 70, 76, 80, 105—107, 111—119, 135, 136, 143, 144, 146—150.

It may be perhaps useful to give the numbers of the Psalms in the LXX. and Vulgate as compared with the received Hebrew text and A. V.

LXX. 1—8	9	10—112	113	114, 115	116—145	146, 147	148—150
A. V. 1—8	9, 10	11—113	114, 115	116	117—146	147	148—150

The desire mentioned above to increase the number of David's psalms is shewn by the addition of an evidently spurious psalm, which, though apparently a translation, is now only extant in the Greek. From the heading it appears that the number of the Psalms (150) which notwithstanding the changes is adhered to in the LXX, was by this time the recognised number of "the Psalms of David."

Its title is "This Psalm, a genuine Psalm of David (or in some MSS. 'to David'), and beyond the number, was written when he fought the single combat with Goliath."

I was a little one among my brethren,
the youngest in my father's house ;
I kept the sheep of my father,
my hands framed an instrument of music,
and my fingers fashioned a psaltery.

Yet who shall tell it to my Lord ?
He is Lord, He heareth it ;
He sent His angel,
and took me from my father's sheep,
and anointed me with the oil of His anointing.

Great men and beauteous were my brethren,
but the Lord had no pleasure in them ;
I went forth to meet the alien,
and he cursed me by his gods ;
but I drew his own sword and cut off his head,
and took away reproach from the sons of Israel.

For the growth of spurious Psalms, cp. the Psalter of Solomon, a collection

the 5th century, or later than the conclusion of the Persian rule towards the end of the 4th.

On the whole we come to the following conclusions :

1. That the present Psalter is composed of collections originally distinct ;
2. That though some grouping together of contemporaneous psalms may be noticed in the minor divisions, the compiler of the whole did not attempt a fusing of the different collections, with a view to a complete chronological arrangement ;
3. That internal criticism, historical, and linguistic, is the only means by which the psalms can be arranged in any chronological order.

APPENDIX B.

On the superscriptions, or titles of the Psalms.

THE superscriptions have not in this edition been given with the Psalms to which they belong, nor have the notes been burdened with discussions as to their meaning. The latest English critic¹ has stated as the result of his study, that in historical notices as in statements of authorship, the inscriptions cannot always be relied on. "They are sometimes genuine, and really represent the most

of 18 Psalms with titles still extant in a Greek translation, and probably composed about 170 B.C.

As an instance of the almost unconscious manner in which the number of Psalms attributed to David may grow even in modern times, it may be stated that the authors of the summaries prefixed to the Psalms in the A. V. have attributed to him not only Pss. 43, 71, which, though not assigned to him in the Hebrew, are thus assigned in the LXX., but also 42, 66, 120, 132, which are not assigned to him in either. In the summary to the 120th they even incorporate a conjecture of their own, that David was then praying against Doeg.

¹ Perowne, *The Book of Psalms*, Introduction, p. cxi.

ancient tradition¹. At other times they have been invented by the caprice of later editors and collectors, the fruits of conjecture² or of dimmer and more uncertain traditions³. In short, the inscriptions of the Psalms are like the subscriptions to the Epistles of the New Testament. They are not of any necessary authority, and their value must be weighed and tested by the usual critical processes."

The superscriptions are of four classes, (1) those that relate to authorship, (2) to historical circumstance, (3) to music, (4) to the purpose of the psalm.

(1) *Authorship.*

In the Hebrew text of the 150 Psalms, 73 are assigned to David, 24 to David's singers, 2 to Solomon, 1 to Moses, 50 are anonymous⁴.

The customary belief has associated all with David, and still pertinaciously claims for him at least those which in the Hebrew titles are assigned to him; but this belief no doubt had its origin in a misunderstanding of the Jewish custom, by which a composite work was soon called by the name of its most eminent author, and indeed as we have seen⁵, the Psalms were quoted as early as the time of the Maccabees as the work of David, just as all the Pentateuch was quoted as the work of Moses.

¹ As in Pss. 3, 7, 18, 60, 102.

² As in Pss. 30, 34, 51—59, 72, 127, etc.

³ As Ps. 90.

⁴ In the LXX., 83 are assigned to David, of which 14 had not previously been assigned to him, while four (Pss. 122, 124, 131, 133) are no longer assigned to him; the same 27 as in A. V. are assigned to David's singers, to Solomon, and to Moses, 1 to Jeremiah, 4 to Haggai and Zechariah, 1 to the sons of Jonadab. This, allowing for three psalms having two authors assigned to them, leaves 34 still anonymous. Cp. the curious tradition in the Talmud: "David wrote the book of Psalms, of which, however, some were composed by the ten venerable elders, Adam the first man, Melchizedech, Abraham, Moses, Heman, Jeduthun, Asaph, and the 3 sons of Korah." Quoted by Mr Westcott, *Bib. Dict.* "Canon."

⁵ Appendix A, p. 454.

That the Hebrew psalmists were accustomed to prefix superscriptions to their own poems has been maintained by many. One writer¹ explains the incongruity of assigning Psalms to David and his contemporaries which are obviously of a later date by the following theory: "No critic whatever," he writes, "contends that all these eleven Psalms (Psalms 73—83) belong to the age of David; and in real truth, internal evidence is in every single instance in favour of a later origin. They were composed then by 'the sons of Asaph,' the members by hereditary descent of the choir which Asaph founded. It was to be expected that these psalmists would in superscribing their psalms prefer honouring and perpetuating the memory of their ancestor to obtruding their own personal names on the Church. . . . If now in the times posterior to those of David the Levite choirs prefixed to the psalms which they composed the names of Asaph, Heman, and Ethan, out of a feeling of veneration for their memories, how much more might the name of David be prefixed to the utterances of those who were not merely his descendants, but also the representatives for the time being, and so in some sort the pledges of the perpetual royalty of his lineage! The name of David is used to denote in other parts of scripture, after the original David's death, the then head of the Davidic family. . . . And thus then we may explain the meaning of the late Davidic superscriptions in the Psalter. The Psalms to which they belong were written by Hezekiah, by Josiah, by Zerubbabel, or others of David's posterity."

This theory is here only quoted to shew that even those who believe fully in the superscriptions have to alter their meaning to meet the demands of criticism. The result is much the same as if they had been disregarded.

But there is no proof that the Hebrew psalmists were in the habit of prefixing their names to their works. A prophet must, it is true, from the nature of his office, add his name to give weight to his words, but there was no such necessity for the psalmist; that the

¹ *Dict. of Bible*, "Psalms."

custom was not an universal one is proved by the existence of 50 anonymous Psalms. And again, internal criticism has shown that many of these superscriptions are unquestionably erroneous. The conclusive arguments which may be derived from language¹ must be taken on the verdict of scholars; but historical criticism will come home to every reader. No one, for instance, would hesitate in rejecting the superscription in LXX. which assigns to David the 137th Psalm: even the compiler in his first attempts at criticism did not hesitate to suggest the more possible authorship of Jeremiah. It is equally impossible to conceive that David could write in the 14th Psalm, "when Jehovah turneth *the captivity* of His people, then shall Jacob rejoice," or that at any period of his life he could have written the last two verses of the 51st Psalm; or again, that, when he fled from the court of Achish, he should have vented the feelings of his wild nomad life in an acrostic psalm².

A list of those which are accepted as Davidic, is given pp. 5, 6. For the rest, even those who may not accept entirely the order in which they have been arranged in this work, will, it is believed, be led by a closer study of them to accept the conclusion that they are not David's.

It is easy in some cases to trace the grounds of internal criticism which have caused the assignment of psalms to particular authors. For instance, the assignment of the 127th (§ 94) to Solomon seems to rest simply on the words "Except Jehovah build the house," which have misled the critic into the idea that the building of Solomon's Temple is the subject of the Psalm; and so again the mention of Sheba and Tarshish³ may have led to the assignment of the 72nd (§ 63) to the same author.

The assignment of 12 Psalms to Asaph, 11 to the sons of Korah,

¹ As from the Chaldaisms, which mark the writings of the Return.

² Ps. 34, where Abimelech (Gen. xx. 2) in the superscription is a mistake for Achish; see 1 Sam. xxi. 10. Other Alphabetical Psalms attributed to David are 9, 25, 37.

³ § 63 Ps. lxxii. 10 with 2 Chron. ix. 1, 21.

1 to Heman the Ezrahite (himself a descendant of Korah¹), 1 to Ethan, or Jeduthun², seems to point to a collection in which equal numbers were assigned to each of three great traditional musicians. In that case the other 11 of Ethan are either omitted or lost³.

(2) *Historical circumstance.*

Of the 73 Davidian Psalms only 13 have historical notices prefixed to them⁴.

Of these historical notices four⁵ are prefixed to Psalms undoubtedly Davidic, and bear the marks of independent tradition. These are

Ps. 3. "When he (David) fled from Absalom, his son."

Ps. 7. "Which he sang unto Jehovah, concerning the words of Cush, the Benjamite." Cush is not mentioned in the historical books.

Ps. 18. "David, the servant of Jehovah, who spake unto Jehovah the words of this song in the day that Jehovah delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul, and he said."

The superscription and psalm occurs in 2 Sam. xxii.⁶

Ps. 60. For the superscription see p. 39.

This notice does not agree in details with the accounts in 2 Sam. viii. 13, 14; x. 16; 1 Chron. xix. 6—19; and must therefore, as well as that of Ps. 7, be founded on some other chronicles; they are therefore

¹ Cp. 1 Chron. vi. 33, 37.

² Cp. 1 Chron. xv. 16—22 with xxv. 1, 3.

³ There seems to be some confusion after the 87th, for the heading of the 88th is obviously made up of two: not only is the authorship assigned to both the sons of Korah, and to Heman, but the Psalm is called both an ordinary Psalm and a Maschil. See below. We must either suppose that the Psalm has had superscriptions written for it by two compilers, or more probably that the first heading "A Song or Psalm, by the sons of Korah," belongs to a lost Psalm.

⁴ The LXX. also prefixes historical notices to Pss. 27, 76, 80, 92, 96, 143, 144.

⁵ Pss. 3, 7, 18, 60.

⁶ Cp. Ps. xxxvi. and § 142 Ps. cxliv. 10. The title 'servant of Jehovah' is not used of a living person, see Deut. xxxiv. 5; Josh. i. 1.

of more weight than those notices¹ which need only the suggestions of a critic, with no more evidence before him than is open to a modern reader.

The nine others² do not seem worthy of credit: they appear chiefly in the Davidian portion of the second Collection (51—72), and are in all cases founded on the Books of Samuel: in these cases it would seem that the compiler, starting with the idea that the Psalms were David's, selected such incidents from the history as he considered adapted to the thoughts in the Psalms.

The superscription of Ps. 102 has no parallel among the Psalms: from its poetical character and peculiar style it has been (p. 250) accepted as the work of the Psalmist himself.

(3) *Musical nature*, and (4) *Purpose of the Psalm*.

Superscriptions of this character are prefixed to 116 Psalms.

A Psalm is described as song, psalm, maschil, michtam, shiggaion, prayer, or hymn of praise. *Song* is the general term³, denoting a metrical, or at least rhythmical piece, not necessarily set to music, and is usually coupled with some more definite designation. It occurs

¹ For traces of the existence of lost chronicles, cp. 1 Kings xi. 41, "the acts of Solomon;" 1 Chron. xxix. 29, "the book of Nathan the prophet, the book of Gad the seer," to which in 2 Chron. ix. 29 are added "the prophecy of Ahijah, the Shilonite, and the visions of Iddo the seer," and 2 Sam. i. 18 "book of Jasher."

² Ps. 34, from 1 Sam. xxi. 10; for the mistake, see above, p. 459 note; Ps. 51, from 2 Sam. xii. suggested by vv. 4, 14; Ps. 52, an Alphabetical Psalm, the notice comes from 1 Sam. xxii. 6, suggested by vv. 1, 2; Ps. 54, from 1 Sam. xxiii. 19, suggested by v. 3; Ps. 56, from 1 Sam. xxi. 11—16; Ps. 57, from 1 Sam. xxii.; Ps. 59, from 1 Sam. xix. 11, suggested by vv. 6, 14, which, however, do not describe the siege of a house, but of a town; Ps. 63, from 1 Sam. xxii. evidently because in v. 1 "a dry and thirsty land" was taken literally; Ps. 142, same as Ps. 57.

³ Cp. Is. v. 1; Song of Solomon i. 1, etc.

in 30 superscriptions¹, and may be used with any of those which follow.

The four next terms, psalm, maschil, michtam, and shiggaion are mutually exclusive, and must therefore refer to the same subject, which appears to be the musical accompaniment.

Psalm is the most common, being applied 56 times; hence the Greek translation, connected with psaltery, has been used to designate all the 150 poems: it denotes "a song with an accompaniment"; *i. e.* with the harp, psaltery (lute), and cymbals, the ordinary Temple music. Cp. § 52 Ps. lvii. 9 and § 153 Ps. cl. 3.

Maschil is applied to 14 psalms: "a skilfully constructed song," *i. e.* with more elaborate music. It occurs § 115, Ps. xlvii. 7, where its connection with music is clear from the context, and where it has been translated "glorious" from an inability to convey more accurately the musical idea.

Michtam is applied to 6 Psalms, and to the *writing* of Hezekiah in Is. 38; it might be translated either a golden poem, *i. e.* of peculiar value; or a hidden poem, a mystery, a dark speech (Cp. § 66 Ps. xlix. 4): but neither affords the necessary contrast to the last two terms. Ewald considers Maschil was accompanied only by the harp, and the treble cymbals; michtam, the song of more deep import, by the psaltery and loud or bass cymbals (see § 153 Ps. cl. 4).

Shiggaion, a dithyrambic ode, with *changing* music, applied to Ps. 7; so Hab. iii. 1, we have "to dithyrambic measures."

¹ With a musical notice, Ps. 46; with "psalm" in 12 titles; "*song of loves*," *i. e.* a bridal song, Ps. 45, see p. 79.

"*Song of ascents*" (degrees, A. V.) Pss. 120—134, that is, as explained p. 266, "of the goings up to Jerusalem from exile." So Ezra vii. 9, "was the foundation of the going up;" cp. John xii. 20.

"*Song at the dedication of the house*," Ps. 30; these words are apparently inserted between a *psalm—of David*; the house is not David's but the Temple; the compiler probably considered vv. 11, 12 to allude to 2 Sam. vi.

"*Song for the sabbath day*," Ps. 92; so the LXX. adds notices to Pss. 24, 29, 31, 37, 48, 66, 94, 95, assigning particular Psalms for use on different days of the week, and on feast days.

Prayer is applied apparently by the authors themselves to Ps. 102 and Hab. iii.; it occurs also Pss. 17, 86, 90, 142: it may be used with either Shiggaion (Hab. i. c.) or Maschil (Ps. 142). Cp. Ps. lxii. 20, and p. 449.

Hymn of praise only applied to Ps. 150, though the whole Psalter is styled in the Hebrew text "the hymns."

The purpose of a *Psalm* is further defined in Ps. c. as "a psalm for thanksgiving;" in Psalm lx. as "to teach," *i. e.* to be learnt by heart. Cp. 2 Sam. i. 18.

In Pss. 38, 70, as "a psalm to bring to remembrance;" *i. e.* to be used with a penitential sacrifice, as we learn from Is. lxvi. 3, "he that maketh a memorial," (A. V. "he that burneth incense". Cp. Lev. ii. 2.)

The musical directions are of three kinds, which are placed in a regular order.

1. The title translated (A. V.) "to the chief musician" in any case denotes that the Psalm is set to music.¹

2. The kind of accompaniments is defined by the use of one of the four designations² given above.

3. The tone or mode to be used is then given, chiefly by a quotation from some familiar poem, which had already been set to that particular mode³. These different modes, though in their nature

¹ This title has been translated "for the leader," "by the leader," and (Ewald) "for leading;" it occurs in 55 Psalms, and appears in a longer form in 6 Psalms and Habakkuk, "for leading with music." A disputed form of this expression occurs in Ps. lxi.

² Psalm, Maschil, Michtam, Shiggaion.

³ Of these modes we find 10; much difference of opinion exists as to their meaning; "upon Sheminith" (Pss. 6, 12), "to the eighth," cp. 1 Chron. xv. 21, probably not the octave, but the eighth in order; "to Gittith," Pss. 8, 81, 84, "to the Gath mode," *i. e.* the mode introduced from Gath; "to Jeduthun," Pss. 62, 77, 39, *i. e.* to the mode introduced by Jeduthun, or Ethan (see p. 460), one of the three great musicians of the time of David.

In several, we find the first words of some popular song; "to Alamothe," Ps. 46, cp. 1 Chron. xv. 20, and "to Muth-labben," Ps. 9, are obscure. The ordinary explanation is "to maidens," and "to the death of the son." Ewald,

obscure, have been compared to the Dorian, Lydian, and Phrygian modes of the Greeks.

There is only one term used in the course and at the conclusion of Psalms. This direction, *Selah*, is given in its place in the A.V., and denotes, "higher, up"; it seems to be a direction to the music to play loud, during an interval in which the voices are silent. It occurs 71 times in 39 Psalms, and 3 times in Hab. iii., generally at the end of a strophe: once in Ps. ix. 16, we find *Higgaion*. *Selah*, "upon a loud instrument, music play loud," a more complete form of the same. Cp. Ps. xcii. 3, "upon a loud instrument, upon the harp."

For the subjects treated in both these Appendices, the most suggestive account will be found in Ewald's *Dichter des alten Bundes*, vol. 1. p. 209, 239. For a full discussion of the literature on the obscure superscriptions, the English reader is referred to articles in the *Dict. of the Bible* by Mr Wright, and to ch. 4, 5 of the very satisfactory introduction of Mr Perowne to *The Book of Psalms*. Among other authors consulted have been Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Psalms* (p. 37); Hupfeld, *The Psalms*, vol. 4 (p. 457); Hengstenberg, vol. 3, p. xxii; Hitzig, *The Psalms*; and of English writers, Thrupp, and Davidson.

altering the reading in Ps. 9, translates "to the mode, youth hath the so." and considers 46 an abbreviation of "to youth:" these words being the commencement of some song. "To Shoshannim," Pss. 45, 69, 80, 60, *i.e.* "to lilies," or as Pss. 80, 60 "to 'As lilies is the covenant,'" *i.e.* pure as lilies; "to Altaschith," Pss. 57, 58, 59, 75, *i.e.* "to 'destroy not,'" "to Mahalath," Ps. 88, 53, *i.e.* "to the sickness," and in 88 "to be sung to 'the sickness.'" Similarly "to Aijelet-Shahar," Ps. 22; "to the hind of the red glow of morning," and "to Jonath-elem-rechokim," Ps. 56; "to 'the dove of dumbness from the strangers.'" "To Nehiloth," in Psalm 5 has been interpreted "to flutes," but it would seem to denote a mode like the preceding, though its meaning is not clear.

APPENDIX C.

The military character of the Hebrew Priesthood in its bearing on the 110th Psalm (pp. 36—38).

THE main difficulty in the 110th Psalm lies in perceiving the connexion of the 4th verse with the rest of the Psalm. The clue to this difficulty will be found in the intimate association of the Hebrew priesthood with the national wars. Hence it comes that in this battle-hymn not only the kingly, but the priestly character of David is brought out.

Whereas the modern idea of priesthood is essentially peaceful, the Hebrew priesthood, from the peculiar circumstances of the early history of the nation, was impressed with a military character. The mission of the Hebrews was not to maintain their faith in a country already acquired, but to win a home for the religion of Jehovah. This could only be achieved by the forcible dispossession of the existing occupants, and on this object all the forces of the nation were concentrated. Thus in the wilderness the congregation formed an encampment¹ when they rested: when they moved, their morning prayer was for the 'scattering of their enemies²;' in the middle went the Ark; around it marched the Levites³, their thighs girt with the sword⁴, the appropriate emblem of those who had earned their title to the priesthood by ready zeal in vengeance⁵ on the enemies of Jehovah. In war, the trumpet⁶ of the priest gave the alarm, a sign that Israel should be 'remembered before the Lord his God, and should be saved from his enemies.' Thus at their first siege, the sound of the priests'

¹ Numb. ii. 2.² Ib. x. 35.³ Ib. ii. 17.⁴ Ex. xxxii. 27.⁵ Numb. xxv. 7, 13; Deut. xxxiii. 9.⁶ Numb. x. 8, 9.

trumpets¹ was regarded as Jehovah's summons to surrender. Then, as in succeeding² times, the presence of the priest on the battle-field assured the troops of victory and symbolized the Divine sanction of the campaign. Often the priests not only blew the trumpets, offered the necessary sacrifice³ and addressed the troops⁴, but fought⁵ in the ranks of the army themselves.

In the monarchy, the priests played an important part in winning David his throne. Saul's massacre of the priests at Nob⁶ eventually led to the enrolment of the whole priestly tribe as supporters of David; Abiathar⁷ fled to David at once with the sacred ephod and the oracular breastplate, and remained with him during his wanderings⁸; afterwards the Levites with the Aaronites under the chief priest Jehoiada 'came to Hebron in armed bands to turn the kingdom of Saul to him;' Zadok, then a 'young man, mighty of valour,' came to his aid with 'twenty and two captains of his father's house⁹.' Thus the priests were knit to David and became the mainstay of his wars. Benaiah, the chief priest's son, stands out as captain of his body-guard¹⁰.

In David's own case the fact of his being a 'man of war' and a 'shedder of blood¹¹,' though it prevented him from building the Temple, was no bar to his receiving the rights and performing the duties of a priest¹². The early records supplied another example of one not of Levitical origin being acknowledged as a priest of the most High God. Melchizedek, 'the king of righteousness,' who had declared the divine sanction on Abram's warfare¹³, seemed the only fit type of this second priest-king whose shoulders were decked with the

¹ Josh. vi. 16.

² 1 Sam. iv. 5; 2 Chron. xiii. 12—15.

³ §§ 21, 22 Pss. xxi, xxii; 1 Sam. xiii. 9, 13. ⁴ Deut. xx. 2—4.

⁵ See Stanley's *Jewish Church*, 2nd Series, pp. 408, 409, to which most of these references are due.

⁶ 1 Sam. xxii. 19. Cp. note p. 38. ⁷ 1 Sam. xxii. 20; xxiii. 6, 9.

⁸ 1 Kings ii. 26. ⁹ 1 Chron. xii. 26—28. ¹⁰ 1 Chron. xxvii. 5.

¹¹ 1 Chron. xxii. 8. See however 2 Sam. viii. 6.

¹² Cp. p. 38. ¹³ Gen. xiv. 20.

priestly cape¹ as the champion of righteousness² at home and of the religion of Jehovah in the field.

In this Psalm the sanction of the prophet is given to the priesthood of the king. Throughout it breathes the spirit of Nathan, whose words³ inspired the nation for all time with a new and deeper consciousness of God's presence with His people. The occasion for such a trumpet-tongued summons to war may well be sought in one of David's great crusades against the heathen, when by the hands of his invincible captain he reduced Philistia and Moab, smote Edom⁴ and Syria in the valley of salt, and held his fearful assize in the ruins of the city of Moloch⁵.

As this Psalm in its historical bearing is the glorification of the kingdom of David as God's Anointed, it will be obvious to any one, who will trace the Jewish idea of the Messiah⁶ through the Prophets, that it would be especially quoted afterwards as the Psalm connecting the reign of David with that of his greater successor.

APPENDIX D.

List of difficult Passages in Prayer-Book Version.

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- 173 ix. 6. O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end, even as the cities which *thou* hast destroyed; their memorial is perished with them.
- 176 x. 17. Break thou the jaws of the ungodly and malicious; take away his ungodliness and thou shalt find none.

¹ 2 Sam. vi. 14.² § 6 Ps. ci. 11.³ § 16 Ps. ii.⁴ § 11 Ps. lx. note (2).⁵ 2 Sam. viii. 1—14; x; xii. 26—31. Stanley's *Jewish Church*, pp. 97—104.⁶ § 63 note.

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- 9 xi. 3. For the foundations will be cast down ; and what hath the righteous done?
- 46 xviii. 26. with the froward thou shalt learn frowardness.
29. with the help of my God I shall leap over the wall.
- 48 45. the strange children shall dissemble with me.
- 212 n. xxii. 21. Thou hast heard me also from among the horns of the unicorns.
29, 30. all such as be *fat* upon earth have eaten and worshipped ; all they that go down into the dust shall kneel before him, and no man hath quickened his own soul.
- 19 xxiv. 6. This is the generation of them that seek him, even of them that seek thy face, O *Jacob*.
- 26, 27 n. xxix. 7. The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire. [The connexion is obscured throughout the Psalm].
- 164 xxxi. 22. Thou shalt hide them privily by thine own presence from the provoking of all men.
23. Thanks be to the Lord, for he hath shewed me marvellous great kindness in a *strong city*.
- 165 24. and when I *made haste*, I said, I am cast out of the sight of thine eyes.
- 51 xxxii. 7. but in the great waterfloods *they* shall not come nigh him.
10. be not ye like to horse and mule, which have no understanding, whose mouths must be held with bit and bridle lest they fall upon thee.
- 218 n. xxxv. 13. my prayer shall *turn into* mine own bosom.
15. yea, the very abjects came together against me *un-awares* (see list of archaisms).
- 222 xxxviii. 17. And I truly am set in the plague.
- 224 xl. 9, 10. Then said I, lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, that I should fulfil thy will.
- 205 n. xlii. 8. therefore will I remember thee concerning the land of Jordan and the little hill of Hermon. One deep calleth another because of the noise of the waterspouts, etc.

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- 342 *n.* xliv. 20. when thou hast smitten us 'into the *place of dragons*.
- 111 xlv. 4. The rivers of the flood *thereof* shall make glad the city of God.
- 113 *n.* xlviii. 2. upon the north side lieth the city of the great king.
3. the kings of the earth are gathered and *gone by* together.
- 202 xlix. 4. I will incline mine ear to the parable, and *shew my dark speech* upon the harp.
5. When the *wickedness of my heels* compasseth me round about.
14. they lie in the hell like sheep, death gnaweth upon them, and the righteous shall have domination over them in the morning : their beauty shall consume in the sepulchre out of their dwelling.
- 238 *n.* li. 4. against thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified in thy saying, and clear when thou art judged.
- 265 *n.* liii. 6. They were afraid *where no fear was*; for God hath broken the bones of him that besieged thee.
- 150 lvii. 5. I lie even among the children of men that are *set on fire*, whose words are spears and arrows.
- 153 lviii. 8. or ever your pots be made hot with thorns ; so let indignation vex him even as a thing that is raw.
- 155, 157 lix. 14. And in the evening they will return, grin like a dog, and go about the city.
- 40 *n.* lx. 4. thou hast given a token for such as fear thee.
6. God hath spoken in his holiness ; I will rejoice and divide Sichem and mete out the valley of Succoth.
- 40 8. Moab is my washpot ; over Edom will I cast out my shoe ; Philistia, be thou glad of me.
- 326 *n.* lxxiii. 13. Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove.

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- 326 n. lxviii. 14. When the Almighty scattered kings for their sake,
then were they as white as snow in Salmon.
- 327 n. lxviii. 27. there is little Benjamin their ruler, and the princes of
Judah their counsel.
- 328 30, 31. When the company of the spearmen and the
multitude of the mighty are scattered abroad among the beasts
of the people, so that they humbly bring pieces of silver,...then
shall the princes come out of Egypt, the Morians' land shall
soon stretch out her hands unto God.
- 242 n. lxxi. 6. I am become as it were a *monster* unto many.
- 252 lxxiii. 8, 9. they stretch forth their mouth unto the heaven, and
their tongue goeth through the world ; therefore fall the people
unto them, etc.
- 314 n. lxxiv. 15. Thou smotest the heads of Leviathan in pieces, and
gavest him to be meat for *the people in the wilderness*.
- 115 n. lxxvi. 4. Thou art of more honour and might than the hills of
the robbers.
- 257 lxxvii. 10. And I said, It is mine own infirmity, but I will
remember the years of the right hand of the most Highest.
- 349 n. lxxx. 2. before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasses stir up thy
strength, and come and help us.
- 262 n. lxxxii. 6. I have said, Ye are gods, and ye are all the children
of the most Highest.
- 295 n. lxxxvii. 3. I will think upon Rahab and Babylon with them
that know me.
4. Behold ye the Philistines also ; and they of Tyre
with the Morians ; lo, there was he born.
- 296 7. The singers also and trumpeters shall he rehearse :
All my fresh springs shall be in thee.
- 166 lxxxviii. 4. free among the dead, like unto them that are
wounded.
- 357 n. lxxxix. 36. He shall stand fast for evermore as the moon :
and as the *faithful witness* in heaven.

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- 108 xc. 5. as soon as thou scatterest them, they are even as a sleep.
- 109 II. for even thereafter *as a man feareth* so is thy displeasure.
- 260 xciv. 15. until righteousness turn again unto judgment: all such as are true of heart shall follow it.
20. wilt thou have anything to do with the *stool of wickedness?*
- 408 n. cvi. 28. they ate the offerings of the *dead*.
- 233 n. cix. 5. let *Satan* stand at his right hand.
- 37 n. cx. 3. In the day of thy power shall the people offer thee free-will offerings with an holy worship; *the dew of thy birth* is of the womb of the morning.
7. He shall drink of the brook in the way; therefore shall he lift up his head.
- 308 n. cxvi. 12. I will receive the *cup of salvation* and call upon the name of the Lord.
- 391 cxix. 83. For I am become like a bottle in the smoke.
- 392 96. I see that all things *come to an end*, but thy commandment is exceeding broad.
- 395 131. I opened my mouth and *drew in my breath*: for my delight was in thy commandments.
- 269 cxx. 4. Wo is me that I am constrained to dwell with Mesech, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar.
- 285 cxxv. 3. for the rod of the ungodly cometh not into the lot of the righteous.
- 287 n. cxxvi. 5. Turn our captivity, O Lord; *as the rivers in the South*.
- 288 cxxvii. 3. for so he giveth his beloved sleep.
- 283 n. cxxix. 3. 4. The plowers plowed upon my back: and made long furrows: but the righteous Lord hath hewn the snares of the ungodly in pieces.
- 352 n. cxxxii. 6. lo, we heard of the same at Ephrata and found it in the wood.

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- 291 cxxxiii. 3. like as the dew of Hermon which fell upon the hill of Sion.
- 129 cxli. 6. But let not their precious balms break my head ; yea, I will pray yet against their wickedness.

APPENDIX E.

List of Archaisms and Ambiguous Expressions in the Prayer-Book Version of the Psalms.

- abide* patiently, abide the Lord, *i. e.* 'wait upon,' or 'for,' 'rest upon,' xxxvii. 9.
- abjects*, subst.—the very abjects came together against me, *i. e.* the vilest persons, xxxv. 15.
- after*—comfort us again after the time that Thou hast plagued us, *i. e.* in proportion to, xc. 15. Cp. 'deal not with us after our sins' (Litany).
- altogether* lighter than vanity itself, *i. e.* all (of them) together, lxii. 9.
- comfortable*—praise Thy Name, because it is so comfortable, *i. e.* comforting, consoling, liv. 6.
- compass*—when the wickedness of my heels compasseth me round about, *i. e.* encompass, 'go round,' xlix. 5 ; xxxii. 8, etc.
- coney*—stony rocks for the conies, *i. e.* rabbit, civ. 18.
- conversation*—such as are of a right conversation, *i. e.* 'path' or 'mode of life,' l. 23. Cp. Phil. iii. 20, where it means 'citizenship.'
- darling*—deliver my darling from the power of the dog, (dimin. of 'dear'), *i. e.* dear life, xxii. 20 ; xxxv. 17. Cp. 'mine honour,' as parallel with 'soul' and 'life,' vii. 5. Cp. *glory*.
- discover* the thick bushes, *i. e.* 'uncover,' *i. e.* 'strip of leaves,' xxix. 8.
- dissemble*. Cp. under *liars*.
- ensue*—seek peace and ensue it, *i. e.* 'follow after and overtake' (Fr. *ensuivre*), xxxiv. 14.
- eschew* evil, *i. e.* 'flee from,' 'shun,' 'avoid.' Cp. Shaksp. *Merry Wives*, v. 5. 'What cannot be eschewed must be embraced' (Germ. *scheuen*, Eng. *shy*), xxxiv. 14.

- fain*—my lips will be fain, *i. e.* glad, lxxi. 21.
- fellow*—the virgins that be her fellows, *i. e.* companions, equals or followers, xlv. 15, 8.
- flitting*—Thou tellest my flittings, *i. e.* wandering (flit, flee, fleet), lvi. 8.
- folk*—blessed are the folk, that He hath chosen to Him to be His inheritance *i. e.* nation (Germ. volk), xxxiii. 12
- froward*—with the froward thou shalt learn frowardness, *i. e.* 'cross,' 'perverse' ('from-ward,' opp. of 'toward,') xviii. 26; lviii. 3; lxiv. 2.
- glory*—awake up, my glory, *i. e.* my soul or 'the best member that I have' (cviii. 1). lvii. 9, cp. *darling*.
- grave*—he hath graven and digged up a pit, *i. e.* 'dig,' or 'make,' vii. 16, (Germ. graben).
- health*—looking for Thy health, *i. e.* 'saving help,' or 'mercy,' 'salvation,' (Germ. heil, Eng. heal, hail, hale, whole), cxix. 123; li. 14; lxvii. 2, etc.
- hell*—they lie in the hell like sheep, *i. e.* Hades, or 'abode of dead,' xlix. 14; xxx. 3ⁿ. (p. 94).
- hold of* superstitious vanities, *i. e.* 'to hold to,' or 'with,' xxxi. 7.
- indite*, my heart is inditing of a good matter, *i. e.* 'dictate,' write from dictation, compose, xlv. 1.
- inform* his princes after his will, *i. e.* 'instruct' (used absolutely), cv. 22; xxxii. 9.
- knap*—peth the spear in sunder, *i. e.* 'snap,' xlvi. 9.
- lay to*—it is time for Thee, Lord, to lay to thine hand, *i. e.* 'apply,' cxix. 126. Cp. Shaksp. *Temp.* IV. 1, '*lay to* your fingers; help to bear this away.'
- learn*—lead me forth in Thy truth and learn me, *i. e.* 'teach,' xxv. 4, 8; cxix. 66, etc.
- leasing*—seek after leasing, iv. 2; speak leasing, v. 6; *i. e.* 'lying,' 'falschood.'
- liars*—to be found liars; often a translation of 'feign obedience,' 'pay homage,' 'submit to.' Cp. 'the strange children shall dissemble with me,' xviii. 45.
- lien*—though ye have lien among the pots. = 'lain,' part. of 'to lie,' lxviii. 13.
- lighten* mine eyes, *i. e.* 'give light to' (enlighten), xiii. 3; they had an eye unto Him and were lightened, xxxiv. 5.
- lover*—my lovers and my neighbours did stand looking on my trouble, *i. e.* a 'loving' or 'intimate friend,' xxxviii. 11.
- noisome* pestilence, *i. e.* noxious, hurtful (an-joy, nuisance), xci. 3.
- poor*—lo, the poor crieth and the Lord heareth, *i. e.* the man 'in misery,' *i. e.* the Psalmist himself, xxxiv. 6, lxix. 30; often of 'captives,' etc., *i. e.* 'in trouble,' 'oppressed.'
- port*—within the ports of the daughter of Sion, *i. e.* gate, ix. 14.

preach the law (*i.e.* declare the covenant), *i.e.* simply to 'speak,' 'tell of,' ii. 7; lxviii. 11 (p. 326), etc.

prevent—mine eyes prevent the night-watches, *i.e.* anticipate, *i.e.* I am rising up before the watches commence, cxix. 148. Cp. Lam. ii. 19, 'Arise, cry out in the night; in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart.' xxi. 3, 'Thou shalt *prevent* him with blessings,' *i.e.* forestall his wishes; but xviii. 18, they *prevented* me in the day of my trouble, *i.e.* 'overtook' me, or 'fell upon' me. So '*prevent* us, O Lord, in all our doings'. Pr. Bk.

quick—go down quick into hell, *i.e.* alive, lv. 16; they had swallowed us up quick, cxxiv. 2, as in the Creed: So Spenser,

'peeping close into the thick
might see the moving of some *quick*.'

i.e. of some live animal: so 'a bank set with quick' (Mortimer), *i.e.* a hedge of living plants; so we say 'cut to the quick,' *i.e.* the living flesh: 'wick' is said to be still used in Yorkshire in sense of 'alive.'

quicken—make alive, cxix. 25, 37, 88, 149, 154, 159, etc.

ramping lion, *i.e.* tearing, pawing, A. V. 'ravening', (Lat. rapere, Eng. rob, etc.) xxii. 13.

refrain my lips, xl. 11; *refrain* my feet, cxix. 101, etc., 'bridle' or 'rein in,' *i.e.* 'check,' lxxvi. 10, 12.

reins—my reins also chasten me in the night-season, xvi. 8, etc. lit. kidneys, to which the Hebrews ascribed the same feelings, (knowledge, joy, pain and pleasure, etc.,) as the Latins did to the 'liver,' and we do to the 'heart' and 'head,' *i.e.* seat of thought, feeling, emotion, etc.

remember themselves (old reflexive use), xxii. 27; so He repenteth Him, Joel ii. 13, and—endeavour ourselves (Pr. Bk.) Cp. turn thee unto me, xxv. 15, etc.

require—I have required that they even mine enemies should not triumph over me, *i.e.* simply to 'ask' without idea of claiming as a right, xxxviii. 16; xxvii. 4.

reward—plenteously rewardeth the proud doer: *i.e.* requite with evil (or with good), xxxi. 26; xxviii. 4; liv. 5, etc. So 'neither reward us after our iniquities.' Pr. Bk.

rid me of mine enemies, lxxi. 2, *i.e.* set me free, cp. A. V. lxxxii. 4, cxliv. 7, 11 (Germ. retten).

right way, *i.e.* straight, plain or level path, free from danger, xxvii. 13.

room—hast set my feet in a large room, *i.e.* space, xxxi. 9; xviii. 36 (Germ. raum).

runagates—letteth the runagates continue in scarceness, lxviii. 6; *i.e.* renegades, rebellious run-a-ways (gate=way).

salvation, *i. e.* help saving from mortal danger, or 'victory,' iii. 8. See *health*.

set by—setteth not by himself, *i. e.* set (store) by, value, esteem, xv. 4. Cp. Deut. xxvii. 16, set light by, *i. e.* value lightly.

soul—made a pit for my soul, *i. e.* life, xxxv. 7. Cp. 231 *n.*

still—soul truly waiteth still upon God, *i. e.* in stillness or in silence (not 'yet' or 'all this time') lxii. 1; so 'hold thee still in the Lord,' xxxvii. 7.

stomach—whoso hath a high stomach, *i. e.* pride, ci. 7.

strange children, *i. e.* foreign nations, xviii. 45; cxiv. 1. Cp. Gen. xlii. 7, made himself strange, *i. e.* played the foreigner.

tarry thou the Lord's leisure, *i. e.* wait on the Lord, xxvii. 16.

tell the towers thereof, *i. e.* count them. So, 'I may tell all my bones,' xxii. 17. 'Thou tellest my flittings,' lvi. 8. Cp.

'And every shepherd tells his tale,
under the hawthorn in the dale.'

there—fear came *there* upon them (there, emphatic, *i. e.* at that place), xlvi. 5.

there the Lord promised his blessing, *i. e.* to it, cxxxiii. 4.

thereafter—as a man seareth, so etc. *i. e.* accordingly, xc. 11. See *after*.

to-ward—to us-ward, xl. 6.

unawares—or at unawares, *i. e.* unexpectedly, xxxv. 15.

unto—my goods are nothing unto Thee, *i. e.* in comparison with, xvi. 2.

vanity—speak vanity, *i. e.* falsehood, xii. 2.

visit, *i. e.* hast regard to or sendest good to, viii. 4.

wholesome strength of His right hand, *i. e.* saving, xx. 6, (Germ. heilsam). See *health*.

within—the king's daughter is all glorious within, *i. e.* within doors, xlv. 14.

. See *Bible Word-Book*, by Eastwood & Wright (Macmillan, 1866), to which many of these references and illustrations are due.

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